

slavery

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Introduction

condition in which one human being was owned by another. A slave was considered by law as property, or chattel, and was deprived of most of the rights ordinarily held by free persons.

There is no consensus on what a slave was or on how the institution of slavery should be defined. Nevertheless, there is general agreement among historians, anthropologists, economists, sociologists, and others who study slavery that most of the following characteristics should be present in order to term a person a slave. The slave was a species of property; thus, he belonged to someone else. In some societies slaves were considered movable property, in others immovable property, like real estate. They were objects of the law, not its subjects. Thus, like an ox or an ax, the slave was not ordinarily held responsible for what he did. He was not personally liable for torts or contracts. The slave usually had few rights and always fewer than his owner, but there were not many societies in which he had absolutely none. As there are limits in most societies on the extent to which animals may be abused, so there were limits in most societies on how much a slave could be abused. The slave was removed from lines of natal descent. Legally, and often socially, he had no kin. No relatives could stand up for his rights or get vengeance for him. As an “outsider,” “marginal individual,” or “socially dead person” in the society where he was enslaved, his rights to participate in political decision making and other social activities were fewer than those enjoyed by his owner. The product of a slave’s labour could be claimed by someone else, who also frequently had the right to control his physical reproduction.

Slavery was a form of dependent labour performed by a nonfamily member. The slave was deprived of personal liberty and the right to move about geographically as he desired. There were likely to be limits on his capacity to make choices with regard to his occupation and sexual partners as well. Slavery was usually, but not always, involuntary. If not all of these characterizations in their most restrictive forms applied to a slave, the slave regime in that place is likely to be characterized as “mild”; if almost all of them did, then it ordinarily would be characterized as “severe.”

Slaves were generated in many ways. Probably the most frequent was capture in war, either by design, as a form of incentive to warriors, or as an accidental by-product, as a way of disposing of enemy troops or civilians. Others were kidnapped on slave-raiding or piracy expeditions. Many slaves were the offspring of slaves. Some people were enslaved as a punishment for crime or debt, others were sold into slavery by their parents, other relatives, or even spouses, sometimes to satisfy debts, sometimes to escape starvation. A variant on the selling of children was the exposure, either real or fictitious, of unwanted children, who were then rescued by others and made slaves. Another source of slavery was self-sale, undertaken sometimes to obtain an elite position, sometimes to escape destitution.

Slavery existed in a large number of past societies whose general characteristics are well known. It was rare among primitive peoples, such as the hunter-gatherer societies, because for slavery to flourish, social differentiation or stratification was essential. Also essential was an economic surplus, for slaves were often consumption goods who themselves had to be maintained rather than productive assets who generated income for their owner. Surplus was also essential in slave systems where the owners expected economic gain from slave ownership.

Ordinarily there had to be a perceived labour shortage, for otherwise it is unlikely that most people would bother to acquire or to keep slaves. Free land, and more generally, open resources, were often a prerequisite for slavery; in most cases where there were no open resources, non-slaves could be found who would fulfill the same social functions at lower cost. Last, some centralized governmental institutions willing to enforce slave laws had to exist, or else the property aspects of slavery were likely to be chimerical. Most of these conditions had to be present in order for slavery to exist in a society; if they all were, until the abolition movement of the 19th century swept throughout most of the world, it was almost certain that slavery would be present. Although slavery existed almost everywhere, it seems to have been especially important in the development of two of the world’s major civilizations, Western (including ancient Greece and Rome) and Islamic.

There have been two basic types of slavery throughout recorded history. The most common has been what is called household, patriarchal, or domestic slavery. Although domestic slaves occasionally worked outside the household, for example, in haying or harvesting, their primary function was that of menials who served their owners in their homes or wherever else the owners might be, such as in military service. Slaves often

were a consumption-oriented status symbol for their owners, who in many societies spent much of their surplus on slaves. Household slaves sometimes merged in varying degrees with the families of their owners, so that boys became adopted sons or women became concubines or wives who gave birth to heirs. Temple slavery, state slavery, and military slavery were relatively rare and distinct from domestic slavery, but in a very broad outline they can be categorized as the household slaves of a temple or the state.

The other major type of slavery was productive slavery. It was relatively infrequent and occurred primarily in Classical Athenian Greece and Rome and in the post-Columbian circum-Caribbean New World. It also was found in 9th-century Iraq, among the Kwakiutl Indians of the American Northwest, and in a few areas of sub-Saharan Africa in the 19th century. Although slaves also were employed in the household, slavery in all of those societies seems to have existed predominantly to produce marketable commodities in mines or on plantations.

A major theoretical issue is the relationship between productive slavery and the status of a society as a slave or a slave-owning society. In a slave society, slaves composed a significant portion (at least 20-30 percent) of the total population, and much of that society's energies were mobilized toward getting and keeping slaves. In addition the institution of slavery had a significant impact on the society's institutions, such as the family, and on its social thought, law, and economy. It seems clear that it was quite possible for a slave society to exist without productive slavery; the known historical examples were concentrated in Africa and Asia. It is also clear that most of the slave societies have been concentrated in Western (including Greece and Rome) and Islamic civilizations. In a slave-owning society, slaves were present but in smaller numbers, and they were much less the focus of the society's energies.

Slavery was a species of dependent labour differentiated from other forms primarily by the fact that in any society it was the most degrading and most severe. Slavery was the prototype of a relationship defined by domination and power. But throughout the centuries man has invented other forms of dependent labour besides slavery, including serfdom, indentured labour, and peonage. The term serfdom is much overused, often where it is not appropriate (always as an appellation of opprobrium). In the past a serf usually was an agriculturalist, whereas, depending upon the society, a slave could be employed in almost any occupation. Canonically, serfdom was the dependent condition of much of the western and central European peasantry from the time of the decline of the Roman Empire until the era of the French Revolution. This included a "second enserfment" that swept over central and some of eastern Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. Russia did not know the "first enserfment"; serfdom began there gradually in the mid-15th century, was completed by 1649, and lasted until 1906. Whether the term serfdom appropriately describes the condition of the peasantry in other contexts is a matter of vigorous contention. Be that as it may, the serf was also distinguished from the slave by the fact that he was usually the subject of the law—i.e., he had some rights, whereas the slave, the object of the law, had significantly fewer rights. The serf, moreover, was usually bound to the land (the most significant exception was the Russian serf between about 1700 and 1861), whereas the slave was always bound to his owner; i.e., he had to live where his owner told him to, and he often could be sold by his owner at any time. The serf usually owned his means of production (grain, livestock, implements) except the land, whereas the slave owned nothing, often not even the clothes on his back. The serf's right to marry off his lord's estate often was restricted, but the master's interference in his reproductive and family life ordinarily was much less than was the case for the slave. Serfs could be called upon by the state to pay taxes, to perform corvée labour on roads, and to serve in the army, but slaves usually were exempt from all of those obligations.

A person became an indentured servant by borrowing money and then voluntarily agreeing to work off the debt during a specified term. In some societies indentured servants probably differed little from debt slaves (i.e., persons who initially were unable to pay off obligations and thus were forced to work them off at an amount per year specified by law). Debt slaves, however, were regarded as criminals (essentially thieves) and thus liable to harsher treatment. Perhaps as many as half of all the white settlers in North America were indentured servants, who agreed to work for someone (the purchaser of the indenture) upon arrival to pay for their passage. Some indentured servants alleged that they were treated worse than slaves; the economic logic of the situation was that slave owners thought of their slaves as a long-term investment whose value would drop if maltreated, whereas the short-term (typically four years) indentured servants could be abused almost to death because their masters had only a brief interest in them. Practices varied, but indenture contracts sometimes specified that the servants were to be set free with a sum of money, sometimes a plot of land, perhaps even a spouse, whereas for manumitted slaves the terms usually depended more on the generosity of the owner.

Peons were either persons forced to work off debts or criminals. Peons, who were the Latin American variant of debt slaves, were forced to work for their creditors to pay off what they owed. They tended to merge with felons because people in both categories were considered criminals, and that was especially true in societies where money fines were the main sanction and form of restitution for crimes. Thus, the felon who could not pay his fine was an insolvent debtor. The debt peon had to work for his creditor, and the labour of the criminal peon was sold by the state to a third party. Peons had even less recourse to the

law for bad treatment than did indentured servants, and the terms of manumission for the former typically were less favourable than for the latter.

Historical survey

The origins of slavery are lost to human memory. It is sometimes hypothesized that at some moment it was decided that persons detained for a crime or as a result of warfare would be more useful if put to work in some way rather than if killed outright and discarded or eaten. But both if and when that first occurred is unknown.

Slave-owning societies

Slavery is known to have existed as early as the Shang dynasty (18th-12th century BCE) in China. It has been studied thoroughly in ancient Han China (206 BCE-25 CE), where perhaps 5 percent of the population was enslaved. Slavery continued to be a feature of Chinese society down to the 20th century. For most of that period it appears that slaves were generated in the same ways they were elsewhere, including capture in war, slave raiding, and the sale of insolvent debtors. In addition, the Chinese practiced self-sale into slavery, the sale of women and children (to satisfy debts or because the seller could not feed them), and the sale of the relatives of executed criminals. Finally, kidnapping seems to have produced a regular flow of slaves at some times. The go-between or middleman was an important figure in the sale of local people into slavery; he provided the distance that made such slaves into outsiders, for the purchasers did not know their origins. Chinese family boundaries were relatively permeable, and some owners established kinlike relations with their slaves; male slaves were appointed as heirs when no natural offspring existed. As was also the case in other slave-owning societies, slaves in China were often luxury consumption items who constituted a drain on the economy. The reasons China never developed into a slave society are many and complex, but certainly an abundance of non-slave labour at low prices was one of the major ones.

Korea had a very large slave population, ranging from a third to half of the entire population for most of the millennium between the Silla period and the mid-18th century. Most of the Korean slaves were indigenously generated. In spite of their numbers, slaves seem to have had little impact on other institutions, and thus the society can be categorized as a slave-owning one.

Slavery existed in ancient India, where it is recorded in the Sanskrit *Laws of Manu* of the 1st century BCE. The institution was little documented until the British colonials in the 19th century made it an object of study because of their desire to abolish it. In 1841 there were an estimated eight million or nine million slaves in India, many of whom were agrestic or predial slaves—that is, slaves who were attached to the land they worked on but who nevertheless could be alienated from it. Malabar had the largest proportion of slaves, about 15 percent of the total population. The agrestic slaves initially were subjugated communities. The remainder of the slaves was recruited individually by purchase from dealers or parents or by self-sale of the starving, and they can be classified as household slaves. Slavery in Hindu India was complicated by the slave owners' ritual need to know the origins of their slaves, which explains why most of them were of indigenous origin. Although there were exceptions, slaves were owned primarily for prestige.

Slavery was widely practiced in other areas of Asia as well. A quarter to a third of the population of some areas of Thailand and Burma (Myanmar) were slaves in the 17th through the 19th centuries and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, respectively. But not enough is known about them to say that they definitely were slave societies.

Other societies in the Philippines, Nepal, Malaya, Indonesia, and Japan are known to have had slavery from ancient until fairly recent times. The same was true among the various peoples inhabiting the regions of Central Asia: the peoples of Sogdiana, Khorezm, and other advanced civilizations; the Mongols, the Kalmyks, the Kazakhs; and the numerous Turkic peoples, most of whom converted to Islam.

In the New World some of the best-documented slave-owning societies were the Klamath and Pawnee and the fishing societies, such as the Yurok, that lived along the coast from what is now Alaska to California. Life was easy in many of those societies, and slaves are known to have sometimes been consumption goods that were simply killed in potlatches.

Other Amerindians, such as the Creek of Georgia, the Comanche of Texas, the Callinago of Dominica, the Tupinambá of Brazil, the Inca of the Andes, and the Tehuelche of Patagonia, also owned slaves. Among the Aztecs of Mexico, slavery generally seems to have been relatively mild. People got into the institution through self-sale and capture and could buy their way out relatively easily. Slaves were often used as

porters in the absence of draft animals in Mesoamerica. The fate of other slaves was less pleasant: chattels purchased from the Mayans and others were sacrificed in massive numbers. Some of the sacrifices may have been eaten by the social elite.

In England about 10 percent of the population entered in the Domesday Book in 1086 were slaves, with the proportion reaching as much as 20 percent in some places. Slaves were also prominent in Scandinavia during the Viking era, 800-1050 CE, when slaves for use at home and for sale in the international slave markets were a major object of raids. Slaves also were present in significant numbers in Scandinavia both before and after the Viking era.

Continental Europe—France, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, and Russia—all knew slavery. Russia was essentially founded as a by-product of slave raiding by the Vikings passing from Scandinavia to Byzantium in the 9th century, and slavery remained a major institution there until the early 1720s, when the state converted the household slaves into house serfs in order to put them on the tax rolls. House serfs were freed from their lords by an edict of Tsar Alexander II in 1861. Many scholars argue that the Soviets reinstituted a form of state slavery in the Gulag camps that flourished until 1956.

Slavery was much in evidence in the Middle East from the beginning of recorded history. It was treated as a prominent institution in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi of about 750 BCE. Slaves were present in ancient Egypt and are known to have been murdered to accompany their deceased owners into the afterlife. It once was believed that slaves built the great pyramids, but contemporary scholarly opinion is that the pyramids were constructed by peasants when they were not occupied by agriculture. Slaves also are mentioned prominently in the Bible among the Hebrews in Palestine and their neighbours.

Slaves were owned in all Islamic societies, both sedentary and nomadic, ranging from Arabia in the centre to North Africa in the west and to what is now Pakistan and Indonesia in the east. Some Islamic states, such as the Ottoman Empire, the Crimean Khanate, and the Sokoto caliphate, must be termed slave societies because slaves there were very important numerically as well as a focus of the polities' energies.

Slaves have been owned in black Africa throughout recorded history. In many areas there were large-scale slave societies, while in others there were slave-owning societies. **Slavery was practiced everywhere even before the rise of Islam**, and black slaves exported from Africa were widely traded throughout the Islamic world. Approximately 18 million Africans were delivered into the Islamic trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trades between 650 and 1905. In the second half of the 15th century Europeans began to trade along the west coast of Africa, and by 1867 between 7 million and 10 million Africans had been shipped as slaves to the New World. Although some areas of Africa were depleted by slave raiding, on balance the African population grew after the establishment of the transatlantic slave trade because of new food crops introduced from the New World, particularly manioc, corn (maize), and possibly peanuts (groundnuts). The relationship between African and New World slavery was highly complementary. African slave owners demanded primarily women and children for labour and lineage incorporation and tended to kill males because they were troublesome and likely to flee. The transatlantic trade, on the other hand, demanded primarily adult males for labour and thus saved from certain death many adult males who otherwise would have been slaughtered outright by their African captors. After the end of the transatlantic trade, a few African societies at the end of the 19th century put captured males to productive work as slaves, but this usually was not the case before that time.

Slave societies

The first known major slave society was that of Athens. In the early Archaic period the elite worked its estates with the labour of fellow citizens in bondage (often for debt). After the lawgiver Solon abolished citizen slavery about 594 BCE, wealthy Athenians came to rely on enslaved peoples from outside Attica. The prolonged wars with the Persians and other peoples provided many slaves, but the majority of slaves were acquired through regular trade with non-Greek peoples around the Aegean. At the time of Classical Athens (the 5th through the 3rd century BCE) slaves constituted about a third of the population. A particularly noteworthy locus of slave employment was the Laurium silver mines, where private individuals could pick out a lode and put their slaves to mining it. As in all other slave societies, it was the profitability of slavery that determined its preeminence in Athens. (Also important were political conditions that made the gross exploitation of citizens impossible.) Slaves were responsible for the prosperity of Athens and the leisure of the aristocrats, who had time to create the high culture now considered the beginning of Western civilization. The existence of large-scale slavery was also responsible, it seems logical to believe, for the Athenians' thoughts on freedom that are considered a central part of the Western heritage. Athenian slave society was finally destroyed by Philip II of Macedonia at the battle of Chaeronea (338 BCE), when, on the motion of Lycurgus, many (but not all) slaves were freed.

The next major slave society was Roman Italy between about the 2nd century BCE and the 4th century CE. Initially, Rome was a polity consisting primarily of small farmers. But the process of creating the empire took them away from their farms for extended periods, and the prolonged wars of conquest in Spain and the eastern Mediterranean during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE created a great flood of captives. Nothing was more logical than to put the captives to work farming, especially the olives and grapes that created much of the prosperity of the late republic and the principate. Slaves and freedmen were responsible for much of the empire's commodity production, and in the early principate they ran its governmental bureaus as well. The conditions were right to put the captives to work: private ownership of land; developed commodity production and markets; a perceived shortage of internal labour supply; and an appropriate moral, political, and legal climate. Roughly 30 percent of the population was enslaved. Roman slave society ended as the slaves were legally converted into coloni, or serfs, and the lands became populated and the frontiers so remote that finding great numbers of outsider slaves was increasingly difficult.

Some lesser Islamic slave societies are also of interest. One is the Baghdad caliphate founded in the 7th and lasting through the 10th century. Many tens of thousands of military captives were imported from Sogdiana, Khazaria, and other Central Asian locales. In the 9th and 10th centuries several tens of thousands of black Zanj slaves were imported from Zanzibar to Lower Iraq, where they constituted more than half the total population and were put to work to clear saline lands for irrigation and to cultivate sugar. More long-term was the slavery practiced in the Crimean Khanate between roughly 1475 and its liquidation by the Russian empress Catherine the Great in 1783. The Crimean Tatar society was based on raiding the neighbouring Slavic and Caucasian sedentary societies and selling the captives into the slave markets of Eurasia. Approximately 75 percent of the Crimean population consisted of slaves or freedmen, and much of the free population was highly predatory, engaged either in the gathering of slaves or in the selling of them. It is known that for every slave the Crimeans sold in the market, they killed outright several other people during their raids, and a couple more died on the way to the slave market. The reasons for the transition of the Crimean Khanate from a slave-owning society to a slave society have not been studied in detail. Probable reasons, however, include the combination of high demand for slaves throughout the Islamic world, the defenselessness of the sedentary agricultural Slavs and others, and the existence of a relatively poor class of Crimean horsemen, who were led by a predatory elite that got rich by slave raiding. Crimean Tatar slave raids into Muscovy were greatly curtailed by the building of a series of walls along the frontier in the years 1636-53 and ultimately by the liquidation of the khanate in 1783.

It is probable that the Ottoman Empire, and especially its centre in Turkey, should be termed a slave society. Slaves from both the white Slavic north and the black African south flowed into Turkish cities for half a millennium after the Turks seized control of much of the Balkans in the 14th century. The proportion of the population that was slave ranged from about one-fifth in Istanbul, the capital, to much less in remoter provincial areas. Perhaps only people such as the slave owners of the circum-Caribbean sugar islands and the American South were as preoccupied with slaves as were the Ottomans.

Slaves in the Ottoman Empire served in various capacities. They were janissary soldiers (*see below*), and they ran the empire, manned its ships, generated much of its handicraft product, and served as domestic servants and in harems. Contemporaries believed that the absolute power of the ruler was based on his military and administrative slaves. The Tanzimat enlightenment movement of the mid-19th century initiated the abolition of slavery; by the 1890s only a few slaves were being smuggled illegally into the empire, and the slave population was greatly reduced.

Other prominent Islamic slave societies were on the east coast of Africa in the 19th century. The Arab-Swahili slave systems have been well studied, and it is known that, depending on the date, 65 to 90 percent of the population of Zanzibar was enslaved. Close to 90 percent of the population on the Kenya coast was also enslaved, and in Madagascar half the population was enslaved. It may be assumed that similar situations prevailed elsewhere in the vicinity and also earlier, but studies to verify the proposition have not been undertaken.

Another notable Islamic slave society was that of the Sokoto caliphate formed by Hausas in sub-Saharan Africa (northern Nigeria and Cameroon) in the 19th century. At least half the population was enslaved. That was only the most notable of the Fulani jihad states of the western and central Sudan, where between 1750 and 1900 from one- to two-thirds of the entire population consisted of slaves. In Islamic Ghana, between 1076 and 1600, about a third of the population were slaves. The same was true among other early states of the western Sudan, including Mali (1200-1500), Segou (1720-1861), and Songhai (1464-1720). It should be noted that slavery was prominent in Ghana and Mali, and presumably elsewhere in Africa in areas for which information is not available, long before the beginnings of the transatlantic slave trade. The population of the notorious slave-trading state of the central Sudan, Ouidah (Whydah), was half-slave in the 19th century. It was about a third in Kanem (1600-1800) and perhaps 40 percent in Bornu (1580-1890). Most slaves probably were acquired by raiding neighbouring peoples, but others entered slavery because of criminal convictions or defaulting on debts (often not their own); subsequently, many of those people were sold into the international slave trade. After the limiting and then abolition of the

transatlantic slave trade, a number of these African societies put slaves to work in activities such as mining gold and raising peanuts, coconuts (palm oil), sesame, and millet for the market.

Among some of the various Islamic Berber Tuareg peoples of the Sahara and Sahel, slavery persisted at least until 1975. The proportions of slaves ranged from around 15 percent among the Adrar to perhaps 75 percent among the Gurma. In Senegambia, between 1300 and 1900, about a third of the population consisted of slaves. In Sierra Leone in the 19th century close to half the population was enslaved. In the Vai Paramount chiefdoms in the 19th century as much as three-quarters of the population consisted of slaves. Among the Ashanti and Yoruba a third were enslaved. In the 19th century over half the population consisted of slaves among the Duala of the Cameroon, the Ibo and other peoples of the lower Niger, the Kongo, and the Kasanje kingdom and Chokwe of Angola.

Slavery in the Americas

The best-known slave societies were those of the circum-Caribbean world. Slave imports to the islands of the Caribbean began in the early 16th century. Initially the islands often were settled as well by numerous indentured labourers and other Europeans, but following the triumph after 1645 of the sugar revolution (initially undertaken because superior Virginia tobacco had left the Barbadian planters with nothing to sell) and after the nature of the disease climate became known to Europeans, they came to be inhabited almost exclusively by imported African slaves. In time the estate owners moved to England, and the sugar plantations were managed by sometimes unstable and unsavoury Europeans who, with the aid of black overseers and drivers, controlled masses of slaves. About two-thirds of all slaves shipped across the Atlantic ended up in sugar colonies. By 1680 in Barbados the average plantation had about 60 slaves, and in Jamaica in 1832 about 150. The sugar plantations were among the contemporary world's largest and most profitable enterprises, paying about 10 percent on invested capital and on some occasions, such as in Barbados in the 1650s, as much as 40 to 50 percent. The proportions of slaves on the islands ranged from more than a third in Cuba, which went into the sugar and gang labour business on a large scale only after the local planters had gained control in 1789, to 90 percent and more on Jamaica in 1730, Antigua in 1775, and Grenada up to 1834.

Slaves were of varying importance in Mesoamerica and on the South American continent. Initially slaves were imported because of a labour shortage, aggravated by the high death rate of the indigenous population after the introduction of European diseases in the early 16th century. They were brought in at first to mine gold, and they were shifted to silver mining or simply let go when gold was exhausted in the mid-16th century. In Brazil, where sugar had been tried even before its planting in the Caribbean, the coffee bush was imported from Arabia or Ethiopia via Indonesia, and it had an impact similar to that of sugar in the Caribbean. Around 1800 about half the population of Brazil consisted of slaves, but that percentage declined to about 33 percent in 1850 and to 15 percent after the shutting off of imports around 1850 combined with free immigration to raise the proportion of Europeans. In some parts of Brazil, such as Pernambuco, some two-thirds of the population consisted of Africans and their offspring.

The final circum-Caribbean slave society was what became the southern United States. Slaves first were brought to Virginia in 1619. Subsequently, Africans were transshipped to North America from the Caribbean in increasing numbers. Initially, however, the English relied for their dependent labour primarily on indentured servants from the mother country. But in the two decades of the 1660s and 1670s the laws of slave ownership were clarified (for example, Africans who converted to Christianity did no longer have to be manumitted), and the price of servants may have increased because of rising wage rates in prospering England; soon thereafter African slaves replaced English indentured labourers. Tobacco initially was the profitable crop that occupied most slaves in the Chesapeake. The invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 changed the situation, and thereafter cotton culture created a huge demand for slaves, especially after the opening of the New South (Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas). By 1850 nearly two-thirds of the plantation slaves were engaged in the production of cotton. Cotton could be grown profitably on smaller plots than could sugar, with the result that in 1860 the average cotton plantation had only about 35 slaves, not all of whom produced cotton. During the reign of "King Cotton," about 40 percent of the Southern population consisted of black slaves; the percentage of slaves rose as high as 64 percent in South Carolina in 1720 and 55 percent in Mississippi in 1810 and 1860. More than 36 percent of all the New World slaves in 1825 were in the southern United States. Like Rome and the Sokoto caliphate, the South was totally transformed by the presence of slavery. Slavery generated profits comparable to those from other investments and was only ended as a consequence of the War Between the States.

The international slave trade

Organized commerce began in the Neolithic Period (New Stone Age), and it may be assumed that slaves were not far behind high-value items such as amber and salt in becoming commodities. Even among relatively simple peoples one can trace the international slave trade. Thus such a trade was going on among the peoples of Siberia before the arrival of the Russians in the 16th and 17th centuries. The slaves so traded were neighbouring people captured in warfare, who were then shipped to distant points where they would be without kin and whence they would be unlikely to flee. Similar commerce in slaves occurred on nearly all continents and provided the bulk of household slaves throughout the world.

The international slave trades that provided much of the chattel for the slave societies flowed out of the great "population reservoirs." Two such reservoirs were the Slavs and contiguous agriculturalist Iranians from antiquity to the 19th century and the sub-Saharan Africans from around the beginning of the Common Era to the middle of the 20th century. A third such reservoir probably was the Germanic, Celtic, and Romance peoples who lived north of the Roman Republic and Empire and who half a millennium later became the victims of the Vikings' slave raids. The dynamics of these raids were as follows: A large demand for slave labour prompted neighbouring peoples (typically migratory or nomadic in habit) to prey on the sedentary agriculturalists living in the reservoir. The raiders developed techniques, of which surprise was perhaps the major one, that put the settled peoples at a disadvantage, for they never knew when and where the raiders might strike. Populations in the reservoir could be completely depleted, as happened to the East Slavs living in the steppe south of the Oka and between the Volga and the Dnepr rivers from 1240 to the 1590s, or they could migrate half a continent away to escape the slave raiders, as did the Ndembu in Africa. Ruthenians, frontier Poles, Caucasians, and numerous African peoples were sorely depleted by slave raids. One alternative was to fight back, as did the Muscovite Russians and the Baya of Adamawa (now northern Cameroon in West Africa), and the consequence in both instances was the creation of an authoritarian garrison state.

The international slave trades developed into elaborate networks. For example, in the 9th and 10th centuries Vikings and Russian merchants took East Slavic slaves into the Baltic. They were then gathered in Denmark for further transshipment and sold to Jewish and Arabic slave traders, who took them to Verdun and León. There some of the males were castrated. From those places the slaves were sold to harems throughout Moorish Spain and North Africa. In the 9th century the Baghdad caliphate got slaves from western Europe via Marseille, Venice, and Prague; Slavic and Turkic slaves from eastern Europe and Central Asia via Derbent, Itil, Khorezm, and Samarkand; and African slaves via Mombasa, Zanzibar, the Sudan, and the Sahara. The Mongols in the 13th century brought their slaves first to Karakorum, whence they were sold throughout Asia, and then later to Sarai on the Lower Volga, whence they were retailed throughout much of Eurasia. Following the breakup of the Golden Horde, the Crimean Tatars took their chattel to Kefe (Feodosiya) in the Crimea, whence it was transported across the Black Sea and sold throughout the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere. Arabs developed similar supply networks out of black Africa across the Sahara, across the Red Sea (from Ethiopia and Somalia), and out of East Africa, which supplied the Islamic world and the Indian Ocean region with human chattel.

Beginning about 1500, a similar process occurred along the coast of West Africa to supply the transatlantic slave trade. The Africans were captured by other Africans in raids and then transported to the coast; one may assume that the number of casualties of African slave raiding was nearly as high as that of Crimean Tatar slave raiding. The captives, primarily adult males, were assembled on the coast by African rulers and kept in holding pens until wholesaled to European ship captains who sailed up and down the coast looking for slave cargo. (As stated above, the women and children often were not sent to the coast for export but were kept by the Africans themselves, often for incorporation into their lineages.) African rulers, who did not allow the Europeans to move inland, often conducted their wholesale business on the coast, such as at Ouidah in Dahomey (now Benin). (Because of the disease climate the Europeans also were reluctant, even unable, to move inland until the mid-19th century.) But African rulers did everything they could to encourage the European sea captains to come to their port.

Once a ship was loaded, the trip, known as "the Middle Passage," usually to Brazil or an island in the Caribbean, was a matter of a few weeks to several months. Between 1500 and the end of the 19th century the time of the voyage diminished considerably. That change was important, because death rates, which ranged from around 10 to more than 20 percent on the Middle Passage, were directly proportional to the length of the voyage. The ship captains had every interest in the health of their cargo, for they were paid only for slaves delivered alive. The death rates among the European captains and crew engaged in the slave trade were at least as high as those among their cargo on the Middle Passage. Of the slave-ship crews that embarked from Liverpool in 1787, less than half returned alive.

Arriving in Brazil or the Caribbean islands, the slaves were sold at auction. The slave auctions were elaborate markets in which the prices of the slaves were determined. The auctions told the captains and their superiors what kind of cargo was in demand, usually adult males. Credit almost always was part of the transaction, and inability to collect was one of the major reasons companies went bankrupt. After the auction the slave was delivered to the new owner, who then put him to work. That also began the period

of “seasoning” for the slave, the period of about a year or so when he either succumbed to the disease environment of the New World or survived it. Many slaves landed on the North American mainland before the early 18th century had already survived the seasoning process in the Caribbean.

It can be assumed that the other international slave trades were comparable in many respects to the transatlantic one, but they have not been adequately studied.

Ways of ending slavery

Slavery came to an end in numerous ways. Household slavery ended because of an exhaustion of supplies, because slavery evolved into some other system of dependent labour, because it withered away, or because it was formally abolished. Productive slavery came to an end for the additional reasons that it ceased to be profitable or that it was abolished by warfare or the threat of warfare.

Throughout history there have been people who in one way or another believed that slavery was not a good or natural condition. Jean Bodin (1530-96), the French founder of antislavery thought, for example, condemned the institution as immoral and counterproductive and advocated that no group of men should be excluded from the body politic. Nevertheless, remarkably few people found the institution of slavery to be unnatural or immoral until the second half of the 18th century. Until that time Christians commonly thought of sin as a kind of slavery rather than slavery itself as a sin. When concern was expressed for slaves, it was for their good care, not for their unfree status.

Frequently, when slavery passed from the scene, it did so with little fanfare. In most societies, such as ancient Babylonia, Israel, Egypt, or Athens, the institution of slavery had little or no connection with the society's rise or demise. In Rome, on the other hand, slavery began to yield to tenancy and the antecedents of serfdom before the fall of the empire, as the diminishing supply of slaves and the rise of their price coincided with the disintegration of the olive oil- and wine-producing plantations of southern Italy and loss of markets in the face of competition from Spain, Gaul, and North Africa. (This standard interpretation has been challenged, however.) In the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) serfdom was the predominant form of dependent labour, and slavery was definitely secondary. Manumitting slaves became much easier, according to the laws, and the *Ecloga* and the *Procheiron Nomos* (see below) prescribed that the slaves of persons who died without testament had to be freed. Throughout most of Europe household slavery persisted well into the late Middle Ages and even later and only gradually died out. Slavic slaves were plentiful, for example, in the Italian city-states as late as the 14th century, and African slaves could be found in Spain and Portugal in the 16th century. Serfdom replaced slavery in medieval Germany. By the end of the Middle Ages slavery no longer existed in England, and the famous Cartwright decision of the reign of Elizabeth I (1569) held that “England was too pure an air for slaves to breathe in.”

Slavery persisted longer in eastern Europe. In Poland it was replaced by the second enslavement; the sale and purchase of slaves were forbidden in the 15th century. A similar process occurred in Lithuania, where slavery was formally abolished in 1588. In Russia it came to an end with the first enslavement: agricultural slaves were formally converted into serfs in 1679, and household slaves were converted into house serfs in 1723. In the Caucasus and in Central Asia slavery persisted until the second half of the 19th century. As the Russian Empire grew and its hegemony spread, it adopted the tendency of 19th-century imperialist powers to enforce abolition when embarking upon colonization. Thus the conquest of the Caucasus led to the abolition of slavery by the 1860s and the conquest in Central Asia of the Islamic khanates of Bukhara, Samarkand, and Khiva by the 1870s.

The reexportation of slaves from England was challenged by a group of humanitarians led by Granville Sharpe. Chief Justice Mansfield ruled in 1772 that James Somerset, a fugitive slave from Virginia, could not be forcibly returned to the colonies by his master. The fate of slavery in most of the rest of the world depended on the British abolition movement, which was initiated by the English Quakers in 1783 when they presented the first important antislavery petition to Parliament. They were following the Pennsylvania Quakers, who had voiced opposition to slavery in 1688. The Vermont constitution of 1777 was the first document in the United States to abolish slavery. Another sign of the spread of antislavery feeling was the declaration in the U.S. Constitution that the importation of slaves could be forbidden after 20 years (in 1808). An act of March 2, 1807, forbade trading in slaves with Africa. Well before the rise of cotton some people hoped that natural processes combined with a prohibition on infusions would put an end to slavery.

In 1807 the British abolished the slave trade with their colonies. In the Caribbean, slavery was abolished by British Parliamentary fiat, effective July 31, 1834, when 776,000 slaves in the British plantation colonies were freed. The British imperial emancipation can be attributed to the growing power of the philanthropic

movement and a double switch in the focus of the British Empire, geographically from west (the Caribbean) to east (India) and economically from protectionism to laissez-faire.

The British move in 1807 to abolish the slave trade had an immediate impact on the juntas struggling for independence in Spanish America. The slave trade was declared illegal in Venezuela and Mexico in 1810, in Chile in 1811, and in Argentina in 1812. In 1817 Spain signed a treaty with Britain agreeing to abolish the slave trade in 1820, but the trade continued to the remaining Spanish colonies until 1880. Chile freed its black slaves in 1823; Mexico abolished slavery in 1829, and Peru in 1854.

The American antislavery movement, linked to the “Second Great Awakening,” succeeded in arousing immense hostility between the non-slave North, where most states had voluntarily abolished slavery by 1804, and the slaveholding South, where the “peculiar institution” became even further entrenched because of the spread of cotton cultivation. By the 1850s, however, the old abolition movement had flagged. It took political developments and forces (especially the emergence of the Free-Soil movement and the conflict over the expansion of slavery), the South's secession, the Civil War, and Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, to put slavery on the road to extinction in the United States. The proclamation was confirmed by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which put an end to slavery.

Puerto Rico abolished slavery (with provisions for periods of apprenticeship) in 1873 and Cuba in 1880. Brazil was the last Western Hemisphere nation to abolish slavery. The British antislavery movement of the 1810s had almost put an end to the institution, but a thriving world market for coffee revitalized it in the 1820s. In 1850 Britain declared that a squadron would enter Brazilian territorial waters to seize vessels carrying slaves, and later that year Brazil responded by equating the slave trade with piracy. On May 13, 1888, all Brazilian slaves were manumitted. Initially there was some opposition by the coffee growers, but their resistance crumbled immediately.

The European colonization movement of the second half of the 19th century put an end to slavery in many parts of Africa, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. The abolition of slavery in both Hindu and Muslim India by Act V of 1843 meant only that the British courts would not enforce claims to a slave, but the Penal Code of 1861 made holding a slave a crime. Having seen to the abolition of slavery in most of Latin America and South Asia, the British turned their attention back to Africa. They moved onto the continent, took control of those governments that were thriving on slavery, and attempted to abolish the institution. Lagos was annexed in 1861, and all of Nigeria followed. In the 1870s British missionaries moved into Malawi, the place of origin of the Indian Ocean Islamic slave trade, in an attempt to interdict it at its very source. In 1890 Zanzibar was made a British protectorate after the sultan's authority had been destroyed by the struggle over the slave trade. In Dahomey the French abolition of slavery resulted in the cessation of ceremonial human sacrifice.

The imperial government formally abolished slavery in China in 1906, and the law became effective on January 31, 1910, when all adult slaves were converted into hired labourers and the young were freed upon reaching age 25. Slavery was legally abolished in Korea in the Gap-o reform of 1894 but remained extant in reality until 1930.

Some parts of Africa and much of the Islamic world retained slavery at the end of World War I. For this reason the League of Nations and later the United Nations took the final extinction of slavery to be one of their obligations. The league had considerable success in Africa, with the assistance of the colonial powers, and by the late 1930s slavery was abolished in Liberia and Ethiopia. After World War II the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights proclaimed the immorality and the illegality of slavery. Slavery was abolished in most Islamic countries, although it persisted in Saudi Arabia into the 1960s. It finally was made illegal in the Arabian Peninsula in 1962. It is probable that slavery no longer exists as a legal phenomenon recognized by a political authority or government any place in the world.

The law of slavery

Sources of slavery law

By definition slavery must be sanctioned by the society in which it exists, and such approval is most easily expressed in written norms or laws. Thus it is not accidental that even the briefest code of a relatively uncomplicated slave-owning society was likely to contain at least a few articles on slavery.

Both slave-owning and slave societies that were part of the major cultural traditions borrowed some of their laws about slavery from the religious texts of their respective civilizations. Principles regarding

slavery that proved to be either unprofitable or unworkable were among the first to be discarded. An obvious example is provided by the biblical law that Hebrew slaves were to be manumitted after six years (Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:12). A similar general recommendation that slaves be freed after six years in bondage was adhered to by many Islamic slave-owning societies; it helps to account for the ferocity and frequency of their slave raids, for they had a need for constant replenishment of their slave supplies. In Christian slave societies, on the other hand, the principle that the tenure of slavery should be limited was almost completely ignored.

Practically every society that possessed slaves wrote about them in its laws, and thus only a few codes can be mentioned here. The ancient Mesopotamian laws of Eshnunna (c. 1900 BCE) and the Code of Hammurabi had a number of articles devoted to slavery, as did the Pentateuch. In ancient India the *Laws of Manu* of the 1st century BCE contained numerous laws on slaves.

Little is known about the Athenian law of slavery, but the Roman law of slavery was extraordinarily elaborate. Roman law was summed up in the great Pandects of Justinian of 529 CE, and some of its slave norms later found their way into the Byzantine Ecloga (which incorporated Syrian norms as well) of 726 CE and, more deliberately, into the Procheiron Nomos of 867-879 CE. Romano-Byzantine norms also found their way into the Bulgarian Court Law for the People ("Zakon Sudnyi Liudem") of the end of the 9th century and the 13th-century Ethiopian Fetha Nagast.

The European barbarian (Germanic) codes, which first appeared in the 5th century CE and remained in effect for about half a millennium, were derived from customary law influenced by Roman law. The slave statutes of the Russian Russkaya Pravda of the 11th-13th century were all clearly of native East Slavic origin. The same was true of the Muscovite court handbooks (Sudebniki) of 1497, 1550, 1589, and 1606. The Muscovite Russians had a special government office to deal with slavery matters, the Slavery Chancellery (1571-1704), and its practice became the basis of chapter 20 of the great Ulozhenie of 1649, which constituted 119 of the 967 articles of the code; other articles dealt with slavery as well.

The Qurʾān was the fundamental starting point for Islamic law (Sharīʿah), including the law of slavery. It was supplemented by the *ijmāʿ*, the scholarly legal consensus, and the *qiyās*, juristic reasoning by analogy. Islamic law regulated in detail every part of the institution of slavery, from the jihad (holy war) and the distribution of booty to the treatment of slaves and emancipation. The last Islamic slave law was promulgated in 1936 by King Ibn Saʿūd of Saudi Arabia, which restated the teachings of the Qurʾān. It also required owners to register slaves with the government and licensed slave traders.

Some sub-Saharan African societies followed Islamic law; others had their own. The latter ordinarily were not systematized until the European colonization movement, and so their law of slavery was oral common law.

Slavery was a relatively prominent institution in the Chinese Tang Code of the 7th century CE. Subsequently it was mentioned in every Chinese law down to the 20th century and was also important in the Korean legal system. The slavery norms of the Mongol Great Yassa of Genghis Khan were locally generated, but subsequent Mongol law reveals considerable influence of the Tang Code.

The circum-Caribbean world had several basic laws of slavery. The slave law of the Spanish-speaking colonies and then independent countries was based on the Siete Partidas of 1263-65 of Alfonso X of Castile and León and the Spanish Slave Code of 1789. Another important code in Latin America was Louis XIV's Code Noir of 1685. The Louisiana Slave Code of 1824 was based on the Siete Partidas and the Code Napoléon.

The Danish Virgin Islands had two largely locally generated codes of 1733 and 1755, although they were approved by the colonial administration of Denmark. The English colonies were completely autonomous, for England had no law of slavery from which to borrow. The first code was that of Barbados of 1688, whose origins are unknown. It was imitated by the South Carolina code of 1740. Beginning with Virginia in 1662, each colony in North America worked out its own ex post facto law of slavery before independence, a process that continued after the creation of the United States and until the Civil War. Slavery is mentioned only three times and referred to at most 10 times (and then only indirectly) in the U.S. Constitution, and, except for a handful of measures on fugitives, there was no federal slave law. The basic protection for the institution of slavery was the Tenth Amendment of 1791, the reserved powers clause, which left the issue of slavery and other matters to the states.

Legal definitions of slavery

Some of the definitions of slavery discussed above were legal, but the majority were not. This section focuses exclusively on legal definitions of slavery. Most groups, whether national or religious, forbade the enslavement of their fellows; thus, the Spanish could not enslave Spaniards, Arabs could not enslave Arabs, and Christians and Muslims could not enslave their coreligionists. Legally, the slave ordinarily had to be an outsider. In law the slave was usually defined as property, and the question then was whether he was movable property (chattel) or real property. **In most societies he was movable property, but in some he was real property.**

Some societies, such as Muscovy in the 16th and 17th centuries, had different legal categories of slaves. There some slaves were inherited, others were purchased forever, others for a limited time could become perpetual slaves, and still others for specific functions such as estate managers. Different varieties or gradations of slaves were found elsewhere as well, as in China and in certain African societies.

Master-slave legal relationships

The master-slave relationship was the cornerstone of the law of slavery, and yet it was an area about which the law often said very little. In many societies the subordination of the slave to his owner was supposed to be complete; in general, the more complete an owner's control over his slave, the less the law was likely to say about it.

A major touchstone of the nature of a slave society was whether or not the owner had the right to kill his slave. In most Neolithic and Bronze Age societies slaves had no such right, for slaves from ancient Egypt and the Eurasian steppes were buried alive or killed to accompany their deceased owners into the next world. Among the Northwest Coast Tlingit, slave owners killed their slaves in potlatches to demonstrate their contempt for property and wealth; they also killed old or unwanted slaves and threw their bodies into the Pacific Ocean. An owner could kill his slave with impunity in Homeric Greece, ancient India, the Roman Republic, Islamic countries, Anglo-Saxon England, medieval Russia, and many parts of the American South before 1830.

That was not the case in other societies. The Hebrews, the Athenians, and the Romans under the principate restricted the right of slave owners to kill their human chattel. The Code of Justinian changed the definition of the slave from a thing to a person and prescribed the death penalty for an owner who killed his slave by torture, poison, or fire. Spanish law of the 1260s and 1270s denied owners the right to kill their slaves. Lithuanian and Muscovite law forbade the killing, maiming, or starving of a returned fugitive slave. Qing Chinese law punished a master who killed his slave, and that punishment was more severe if the slave had done no wrong. The Aztecs under some circumstances put to death a slave owner who killed his slave. No society, on the other hand, had the slightest sympathy for the slave who killed his owner. Roman law even prescribed that all other slaves living under the same roof were to be put to death along with the slave who had committed the homicide.

Assault and general brutality were other concerns of the law of slavery. In antiquity slaves often had the right to take refuge in a temple to escape cruel owners, but that sometimes afforded little protection. The ancient Franks and the Germans warned owners against cruelty. The Code of Justinian and the Spanish *Siete Partidas* deprived cruel owners of their slaves, and that tradition went into the Louisiana Black Code of 1806, which made cruel punishment of slaves a crime. In modern societies brutality and sadistic murder of slaves by their owners were rarely condoned on the grounds that such episodes demoralized other slaves and made them rebellious, but few slave owners were actually punished for mistreating their slaves. In the American South 10 codes prescribed forced sale to another owner or emancipation for maltreated slaves. Nevertheless, cases such as *State v. Hoover* (North Carolina, 1839) and *State v. Jones* (Alabama, 1843) were considered sensational because slave owners were punished for savagely "correcting" their slaves to death.

It was not an axiom of the master-slave relationship that the former automatically had sexual access to the latter. That was indeed the case in most societies, ranging from the ancient Middle East, Athens, and Rome to Africa, all Islamic countries, and the American South. Places such as Muscovy, however, forbade owners to rape their female slaves, while the Chinese and the Lombards forbade the raping of married slave women. More problematic were sexual relations between mistresses and male slaves. Athens and Rome both put the slave to death, and Byzantine law prescribed that the mistress was to be executed and the slave to be burned alive. The Danish Virgin Islands' laws of 1741, 1755, and 1783, in an attempt to protect northern Europeans from African "contamination," prescribed a fine of 2,000 pounds of sugar for a man who raped a black slave, and a white woman who had sexual relations with a black slave was to be fined, imprisoned, and then deported.

The labour and food regimes were central to almost every slave's life. In societies where the owner's control over his slave was total, such as the Roman Empire or the pre-1830 American South, the law said little or nothing about how long he could work him and whether his slave had a right to food and clothing. In South India the slave owner had an absolute right to whatever labour his slave was capable of rendering. In Muscovy, on the other hand, a slave owner was jailed for forcing his slaves to labour on Sunday. In Judea in 200 BCE, in Sicily in 135-32 BCE, and on the Nile in 46 CE, regulations prescribed the food rations a slave could expect. The Lithuanian Statute of 1588 and the Russians in 1603 and 1649 decreed that slaves had a right to be fed. The Danish Virgin Islands in 1755 prescribed adequate food rations. The Alabama Slave Code of 1852 mandated that the owner had to provide slaves of working age a sufficiency of healthy food, clothing, attention during illness, and necessities in old age.

Family and property

A major issue was whether the master had to allow the slave to marry and what rights the owner had over slave offspring. In general, a slave had far fewer rights to his offspring than to his spouse. Babylonian, Hebrew, Tibetan-speaking Nepalese Nyinba, Siamese, and American Southern slave owners thought nothing of breaking up both the conjugal unit and the nuclear family. Unexpectedly, the 1755 Danish Virgin Islands Reglement prohibited separating minors from their parents. In Muscovy and China, slave owners could sell or will children apart from their parents, but marriages were inviolable.

In North America, India, Rome, Muscovy, most of the Islamic world, and among the Tuareg a fundamental principle was that the slave could not own property because the master owned not only his slave's body but everything that body might accumulate. This did not mean, however, that slaves could not possess and accumulate property but only that their owners had legal title to whatever the slaves had. In a host of other societies, such as ancient and Roman Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Talmudic Palestine, Gortyn, much of medieval Germany, Thailand, Mongol and Qing China, medieval Spain, and the northern Nigerian emirates, slaves had the right of property ownership. Some places, such as Rome, allowed slaves to accumulate, manage, and use property in a peculium that was legally revocable but could be used to purchase their freedom. This provision gave slaves an incentive to work as well as the hope of eventual manumission.

Considerable research has been done on the treatment of slaves, and the consensus is that, while the law may have spelled out the desired social standards of master-slave relations, it did not necessarily define the reality for any particular situation. Sadists, even psychopaths, who could not cope with their right of total dominance over another human being, might appear anywhere, as might kindly masters. More determining than the law were the conditions of the society itself. At one extreme, among the Tuareg of North Africa, the slave owners themselves often lived badly, and so, of course, did their slaves. At the other extreme, in the American South material conditions were sufficiently favourable to provide comparative comfort for both masters and slaves. Moreover, slaves born of already enslaved parents usually were treated much better than those purchased or captured from foreign groups. The treatment of slaves in expansive, dynamic societies was likely to be worse than in more stable ones.

Legal relationships between slave owners

There was more uniformity across systems regarding legal relationships between slave owners. All societies had provisions for the recovery of runaways, and most imposed sanctions on owners who stole others' slaves (a capital offense in some systems) or helped them to flee. There also were relatively uniform laws about passing slaves from one generation to another.

There was considerable variability among societies in the law of slave transactions. Whereas Roman-law societies had elaborate norms on contracts, Muscovy had essentially none. Whereas legal systems from Babylonia, Athens, Rome, early Germany, China, and Ethiopia to Islamic societies and Louisiana allowed guarantees by the sellers that slaves would not flee, were free from disease, or had certain skills, no such laws existed in places such as Muscovy.

Legal relationships between slaves and free strangers

Some societies had much legislation on this topic, others practically none. Where the slave was completely dependent on his owner, few laws existed beyond the normal rules governing any form of property; it was the owner's responsibility to recover damages if a third party killed or assaulted either his cow or his slave. The owner, moreover, was held equally or even more responsible for the slave's actions, ranging from

homicide to theft, than was the slave himself, for the society desired that the former control his property and there was no assurance that sanctions, especially money fines, could be enforced against slaves.

Homicide of a slave by a stranger was a revealing test of a society's attitude toward the slave. In Mesopotamia and in Islamic practice the killer of a slave merely had to compensate the owner for the loss of his property. Elsewhere, however, it was different. Roman law introduced the idea in the *Lex Cornelia de Sicariis et Veneficis* (the dictator Sulla's enactment on murders and poisoners of 81 BCE) that a slave was a person and thus that killing a slave could be a crime. That provision found its way into the Code of Justinian. In North America in the period from 1770 to 1830 the killing of a slave was equated in common law with the murder of a white person. Laws were uniformly harsh when a slave killed a stranger who was a freeman.

Some societies did not allow third parties to assault slaves with impunity. In Muscovy, for example, a slave might have honour and could recover from a third party who injured his honour. Societies elsewhere, however, such as the North American Yurok, Tlingit, and other neighbouring Indians, as well as in the American South, explicitly stated that slaves could have no honour, personal status, or prestige. South Carolina law noted that the slave was not "within the peace of the state, and therefore the peace of the state [was] not broken by an assault and battery on him." Conversely, when a slave assaulted a freeman, the latter often recovered from the slave's owner. Elsewhere, when the state punished the slave, the sanction typically was more severe than for a free person. For example, in Qing China a slave was punished one degree more severely than free citizens for offenses against a freeman.

Most societies, such as those in Athens, Rome, Kievan Rus, Thailand, and Louisiana, did not allow slaves to contract independently with third parties, although some allowed the slave to make a contract on his owner's behalf. The brutal deprivation of rights was expressed in the Alabama case *Creswell's Executor v. Walter* (1860); the slave, said the court, had "no legal mind, no will which the law can recognize.... Because they are slaves, they are incapable of performing civil acts." On the other hand, in a few societies, as in the ancient Middle East, slaves were allowed to contract with third parties. Roman slaves were allowed to make contracts in regard to third peculium.

A few societies, such as late Assyria and Muscovy, allowed slaves to testify in court, but most did not. It was a rare society that permitted a slave to serve as a witness against his owner, but some societies, such as ancient Nuzi and Muscovy, allowed slaves to testify against, even to sue, third parties. That was particularly likely to be the case when slaves played a major role in the society, because disputes could not be resolved by the freemen alone without resort to evidence provided by slaves.

Laws of manumission

Laws of manumission varied widely from society to society and within societies across time. They are often viewed as the litmus test of a particular society's views of the slave, that is, of the capacities the slave was likely to exhibit as a free human being. Many Islamic societies, broadly interpreting the Hebrew prescription, generally prescribed that slave owners had to free their slaves after the passage of a number of years, essentially the length of time they considered it took for an "outsider" to become an "insider." Most other societies allowed masters to free their slaves whenever they wished, although there were exceptions. Some legal systems prescribed manumission when the slave adopted the religion of his owner. It is hardly surprising that manumission was more frequent in systems of household slavery, for intimate relations between master and slave soon converted the outsider into an insider. With notable exceptions, such as Athens, Rome, Muscovy, and some circum-Caribbean societies, many societies required manumission after three generations.

Birth was occasionally a route to manumission. In thriving slave systems such as those of the New World, in harsh systems such as those among the Northwest Coast Indians and the medieval Germanic peoples, or even in milder systems such as those of the Chinese and the Muscovites, a slave's offspring simply added to the slave population. But that was not universally the case; African slave societies, such as the Dahomeans of West Africa, the Ashanti of Ghana, or the Azande living between the Congo and the Nile, prescribed that the offspring of slaves should be free, as part of the process of incorporation into a new lineage.

Although Islamic law did not require manumission upon birth, the Qur'ān recommended it, and slave owners were often inclined to follow the religious tenet. The Aztecs freed all children born in slavery except the offspring of traitors. In Thailand emancipation was considered a pious act, and at their death many owners freed their slaves.

The rate of manumission did not necessarily correspond to the legal ease of manumission. It should be noted, however, that in Rome manumission was relatively easy and was widely practiced, even though there was a 5 percent tax on manumission in the Republic, and the *Lex Fufia Caninia* of 2 BCE forbade

manumission by testament of more than a fifth to a half of one's slaves, depending on the number owned. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, manumission was common in most periods, and the freed person typically became a kind of relative in a process of assimilation. In Neo-Babylonia, in Late and Middle Assyria, and in Muscovy manumission was easy but rare; in the American South manumission was comparatively difficult and almost never happened after the prohibition on importing new slaves. The factors of institutional dynamism, expansionism, and profitability, as well as race (*see below*), may have been the most crucial variants for the South, where manumission was even forbidden in South Carolina in 1820, Mississippi in 1822, Arkansas in 1858, and Maryland and Alabama in 1860; other factors were at work in the ancient Middle East and Muscovy.

There was considerable variation among societies as to whether a slave was allowed to accumulate property that he might keep after manumission. One form of such accumulation was the Roman *peculium*, which legally belonged to the master. One of its heirs was called *coartación*, the self-purchase system, widely used 1,500 years later in Latin America.

After manumission, most societies prescribed a period of legal transition to freedom. In the Roman Empire, China, and elsewhere, this period took three generations and might mean that the grandchild of a slave owner (the “patron”) was legally responsible for the grandchild of a slave (his “client”). Thereafter the descendants of the freedman became full members of society, although perhaps still despised. The reason for the legally mandated period of transition to freedom was clear: the slave initially was not a member of the society but an outsider (*see below*), and it took time to become integrated into the new society. Equally important, the slave was dependent on his owner, and it took time for the freedman and his heirs to become fully self-reliant members of society. If the slave owner and his heirs were not responsible for the freedmen, the fear was, as expressed in the Louisiana Slave Code of 1824, that the latter might otherwise become public wards.

The sociology of slavery

The slave as outsider

The slave generally was an outsider. He ordinarily was of a different race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion from his owner. The general rule, as enunciated by the specialist on classical slavery Moses I. Finley, was that “no society could withstand the tension inherent in enslaving its own members.” In most cases, the slave was an outsider because he was enslaved against his will in one society and then taken by force to another.

As with nearly all rules, there were exceptions, however. Korea, for reasons that are not understood, was one. India was another exception, because of ritual requirements that the social origins of intimate associates be known; there slaves were ritually distanced from their owners. Muscovite Russia, which had outsider slaves as well, was yet another exception, perhaps because the boundaries between insiders and outsiders were blurred. A number of scholars have pointed out that, although the status of the slaves was uniformly lower than that of comparable free people in every society, the material and sometimes other conditions of slaves were frequently better than those of free people; thus it is not surprising that free people occasionally volunteered to be slaves. What is somewhat more surprising is that so few societies found that form of social welfare to be acceptable; most took measures to prohibit or inhibit it. Solon in 594 BCE, for example, forbade enslavement for debt in Athens, and the Lex Poetelia Papiria did the same for Rome, about 326 BCE. Muscovy in 1597 prevented self-sale into slavery from becoming hereditary by mandating manumission of such slaves on their owners' deaths.

Regardless of the slave's origin, he was nearly always a marginal person in the society in which he was enslaved. In Africa slaves were despised, and their low status, which was passed on to freedmen, persists to the present time. In most societies most slaves were at the very bottom of society.

Attitudes toward slavery: the matter of race

Slaves in most societies were despised. This is best seen in the homology for slaves. The favourite homology was the woman or wife, then the minor child or an animal. Other terms for slaves were the apprentice, the pauper, the harlot, the felon, the actor, and the complex image of the Southern “Sambo” or Caribbean “Quashee.” Throughout history slaves have often been considered to be stupid, uneducable, childlike, lazy, untruthful, untrustworthy, prone to drunkenness, idle, boorish, lascivious, licentious, and cowardly. In China slaves were considered to be “mean” and “base”; in India they were fed table scraps.

The attitudes of the world's great religions toward slavery are of special interest. The Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition has been the most tolerant of slavery. Judaic and Islamic canonical texts refer frequently to slavery and treat it as a natural condition that might befall anyone. But they view it as a condition that should be gotten over quickly. Islamic practice was based on the assumption that the outsider rapidly became an insider and consequently had to be manumitted after six years. New Testament Christianity, on the other hand, had no prescriptions that slaves be manumitted. Canon law sanctioned slavery. This was attributable at least partially to Christianity's primary focus on spiritual values and salvation after death rather than on temporal conditions and the present life. Under such a regime it mattered little whether someone was a slave or a free person while living on earth.

A major issue in the topic of attitudes toward slavery is that of race. Although slaves were usually outsiders and often despised, there nevertheless were different kinds of outsiders and different degrees of contempt. Studies have shown that race made a difference. In Rome, where most owners and slaves were white, manumission was frequent. In Africa, where most owners and slaves were black, lineage incorporation was the primary purpose of slavery, and in most societies slaves were allowed to participate in many aspects of social life. In the American South, however, where the owners were of northern European stock and the slaves of African stock, the degree of social isolation of and contempt for slaves was extraordinary. Southern slaves were forbidden to engage in occupations that might demonstrate their capacities, intermarriage almost never occurred, and manumission was almost unheard of as the reigning publicists proclaimed ever more loudly that blacks lacked any capacity to maintain themselves as free individuals.

Slave occupations

Throughout history the range of occupations held by slaves has been nearly as broad as that held by free persons, but it varied greatly from society to society. The actual range did not depend upon whether the slave lived in a slave-owning or a slave society, although the greatest restrictions appeared in the latter.

To start at the top, the highest position slaves ever attained was that of slave minister, or *ministerialis*. *Ministeriales* existed in the Byzantine Empire, Merovingian France, 11th-century Germany during the Salian dynasty, medieval Muscovy, and throughout the Ottoman Empire. A few slaves even rose to be monarchs, such as the slaves who became sultans and founded dynasties in Islam.

At a level lower than that of slave ministers were other slaves, such as those in the Roman Empire, the Central Asian Samanid domains, Qing China, and elsewhere, who worked in government offices and administered provinces. Some of those slaves were government property, whereas others belonged to private individuals who employed them for government work.

On a level similar to that of slaves working in government were the so-called temple slaves. They were employed by religious institutions in Babylonia, Rome, and elsewhere. Unless they were ultimately destined for sacrifice to the gods, temple slaves usually enjoyed a much easier life than other slaves. They served in occupations ranging from priestess to janitor.

Slaves fought as soldiers and usually were considered of high status. In some societies military slaves belonged to private individuals, in others to the government. In 16th-century Muscovy, for example, cavalymen purchased slaves who fought alongside them on horseback; in the later 17th century Muscovite slaves were relegated to guarding the baggage train. A special type of slave soldier was the Ottoman janissary. The Islamic Ottoman Turks confiscated Christian children (called "the tribute children"), took them to Istanbul, and raised them to be professional soldiers, or janissaries. Some janissaries served as members of the palace guard and became involved in the succession struggles of the Ottoman Empire. The Egyptian Mamlūks were also professional soldiers of slave origin who rose to run the entire country. The African Hausa of Zaria and most Sudanic regimes included slaves in all ranks of the soldiery and command. The canoe crews of the West African coast were usually slaves. The British even had detachments of slave soldiers in the Caribbean.

Societies that explicitly refused to employ slaves in combat, such as Athens in its fleet, Rome in its infantry legions, or the American South in the Civil War, were rare. They took such action because fighting was done by freemen, and it was feared that it would be necessary to free the slaves if they could fight. In fact, all of those slave societies occasionally resorted to using slave soldiers when their military situations became desperate.

In many societies slaves were employed as estate managers or bailiffs. This was especially likely to be the case when it was deemed unfitting for freemen to take or give orders involving other freemen. Where such cultural taboos existed, managers were almost always either real outsiders (imported foreigners) or fictive

outsiders (slaves). In Muscovy estate managers were a special category of slave, and they were the first whose registration with the central authorities was required.

Still other high-status slaves worked as merchants. Before the invention of the corporation, using slaves was one way to expand the family firm. The practice seems to have begun in Babylonia and was perpetuated in Rome, Spain, the Islamic world, China, and Africa. Slaves were entrusted with large sums of money and were given charge of long-distance caravans. A few slaves in Muscovy were similarly employed in the Siberian fur trade. Other societies, particularly in the American South, forbade slaves to engage in commerce out of fear that they would sell stolen goods.

In nearly all societies possessing slaves, some slaves were found in what might be termed urban occupations ranging from petty shopkeepers to craftsmen. In the Tredegar Iron Works of Richmond, Virginia, much of the labour force consisted of slaves. In the American South, ancient Rome, Muscovy, and many other societies, slaves worked as carpenters, tailors, and masons. In Bursa, Turkey, some of the finest weaving ever done was by slave craftsmen, who often contracted to fulfill a certain amount of work in exchange for emancipation. The stereotype that slaves were careless and could only be trusted to do the crudest forms of manual labour was disproved countless times in societies that had different expectations and proper incentives.

Only a small portion of slaves throughout history were fortunate enough to be employed in elite or prestige occupations. Most were assigned to strictly physical labour, sometimes the most degrading a society had to offer. Among the worst forms of slave employment were prostitution and occupations demanding hard physical labour. Mining, often conducted in dangerous conditions causing high death rates, seems to have been the worst. The silver mines at Laurium employed as many as 30,000 slaves, who contributed to the prosperity on which Athenian democracy was based. Slaves were also used in gold mining in Africa and in gold and silver mining in Latin America. Gold and coal mining employed (and killed) millions of state slaves of the Gulag in the Soviet Union between the 1920s and 1956. Slaves have been used on great construction projects such as military fortifications, roads, irrigation projects, and temples from Babylonian to Soviet times. Timber felling for lumber and firewood was another form of hard slave labour, as in the Gulag. Yet another form of brutal slave labour was rowing in the galleys, particularly those that belonged to the Ottoman Empire and sailed the Mediterranean. Tens of thousands of Slavs, victims of Crimean Tatar slave raids, first suffered a hellish existence in the Crimea itself and then ended their days rowing on Ottoman triremes.

Agriculture

Large numbers of slaves were employed in agriculture. As a general rule, slaves were considered suitable for working some crops but not others. Slaves rarely were employed in growing grains such as rye, oats, wheat, millet, and barley, although at one time or another slaves sowed and especially harvested all of these crops. Most favoured by slave owners were commercial crops such as olives, grapes, sugar, cotton, tobacco, coffee, and certain forms of rice that demanded intense labour to plant, considerable tending throughout the growing season, and significant labour for harvesting. The presence or absence of such crops and their relative profitability were among the major determinants of whether or not a slave-owning society became a slave society. In the Roman Empire employment in olive groves and vineyards occupied many slaves. Sugar cultivation made 9th-century Iraq into a slave society. Rice, coconut, coffee, clove, kola nut, peanut, and sesame cultivation were central occupations in some African societies.

The great discovery in Brazil in the second half of the 16th century was the gang labour system, which was so cost-effective that it made Brazilian sugar cheaper in Europe than the sugar produced in the islands off Africa. A plantation using gang labour could produce, on average, 39 percent more output from comparable inputs than could free farms or farms employing non-gang slave labour. The secret of success was that slaves could be driven, whereas free labour could not; this led to the creation of very profitable gangs of slaves supervised by white overseers and black drivers. Tobacco and coffee cultivation also used gang labour, but cultivation of these crops was less physically demanding than that of sugar and cotton and led to much lower mortality rates than did sugar and rice.

Throughout history domestic service was probably the major slave occupation. Drawing water, hewing wood, cleaning, cooking, waiting on table, taking out the garbage, shopping, child-tending, and similar domestic occupations were the major functions of slaves in all slave-owning societies. In a major productive slave system, the Roman Empire at the time of Augustus and later, the richest 5 percent of Italy's population owned one million house slaves (another two million were employed elsewhere, out of a total population of about 7.5 million people). In yet another productive slave system, the American South, large numbers of slaves also worked in their owners' houses. A related function was concubinage, unquestionably one of the major uses of female slaves since the beginning of the institution and particularly prevalent in China. Some

societies prescribed that a concubine who bore her owner children was to be freed; others, ranging from the ancient Middle East to the European Middle Ages, specified that the offspring of free-slave unions were to be freed. Rome and the American South were unusual in believing that all concubines and offspring should remain enslaved. Added to this in Africa was the function of lineage expansion, one of the major purposes of slavery in the sub-Saharan region.

Slave demography

It is sometimes alleged that slavery and marriage were totally incompatible, for recognition of the husband-wife bond would have limited intolerably the slave owner's authority and his right to dispose of his property. Historically, however, such a view is incorrect. Limitations on the right to dispose of property have been frequent throughout history, and slaves were no exception. Thus, slave marriages were recognized in a number of slave-owning societies, including Carthage, Hellenistic Greece, late Byzantium, most of the Roman Catholic medieval world, Qing China, Hindu India, Thailand, the Tlingit and Kwakiutl, and Oregon coast tribes. Hanbalī Muslims stated that a slave could insist that his master provide him with a spouse, and Ming Chinese masters were obliged to choose mates for their female slaves when the latter were in their teens and for males around the age of 20. In Russia marriage between a free person and a slave was recognized legally, but according to one of the oldest Russian laws the free person became enslaved by marrying a slave. In Muscovy if a married slave fled, remarried, and was subsequently apprehended, he was to be rejoined to the first spouse.

In the majority of slave societies (the Danish Virgin Islands excepted), on the other hand, slave marriages were not recognized in law and were not something that slave owners had to think about legally when disposing of slaves. For example, the Louisiana Code of 1824 explicitly stated that a slave had no right to be married. Nevertheless, even in these societies, including Rome, the American South, and West Indian Barbuda, slaves formed what they considered marriages and had children. Southern slave owners often recognized such marriages (even across estate boundaries) and their offspring because to have done otherwise would have interfered with production. In Brazil slave marriages were recognized by the Roman Catholic Church and recognized by law in 1869, but in 1875 only one-sixth of the slaves of marriageable age were recorded as married or widowed.

Slave demography was frequently determined by the occupational employment of the slaves. Consequently, sexual imbalance was not at all unusual. In 9th-century France on the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés's territory there were nearly three male slaves for every female, presumably because of the demand for agricultural labourers. In late medieval Europe, on the other hand, there was a great demand for female slaves as domestics and concubines. The same was true in China, where by the end of the Qing era the institution of slavery had become primarily a female one. In early modern Russia there were two male slaves for every female because of a market demand for cavalymen, military body servants, and domestics who could perform heavy labour. Concubinage, moreover, was illegal, and those who sold themselves into slavery practiced female infanticide before selling themselves. In many parts of Africa the demand was primarily for women and children for the purpose of incorporation into and expansion of lineages. Adult males were often killed unless they could be exported abroad. Such export conveniently fit into the circum-Caribbean demand for productive slaves to work in sugar, tobacco, and cotton production. Consequently, twice as many males as females and relatively few children under age 10 were shipped to the New World.

One of the notions about slavery has been that slaves rarely reproduced themselves in bondage. Given the skewed demographic profile of many slave societies, it is not surprising that they failed to do so. The slaves of the Athenian Laurium silver mines or the Cuban sugar plantations, for example, lived in largely male societies. In Islamic slave-owning societies, castration and infibulation curtailed slave reproduction.

The major exception to the rule was North America, where slaves began to procreate in significant numbers in the mid-18th century. This fact helped the slave owners survive the cutting off of imports in 1808. Between the censuses of 1790 and 1860 the slave population of the South expanded enormously—from 657,327 to 3,838,765—one of the fastest rates of population growth ever recorded prior to the advent of modern medicine. Paradoxically, although the Southern slave regime was one of the most dehumanizing ever recorded, it was one of the most favourable on record demographically, because the nutritional and general living environments were highly conducive to explosive population growth. Without significant imports the Southern slave population increased fourfold between the early 1800s and 1860.

The ages of slave populations also were determined partially by productive requirements. As mentioned above, in Africa children were preferred for incorporation into lineages, whereas in much of the circum-Caribbean world adults were demanded for production. As a consequence, the age pyramids of both societies were skewed; in Africa children predominated, in much of the New World people over age 15. In

Muscovy, to take another example, the age structure was skewed toward young adults, for it was primarily young adult males (aged 15-25) who sold themselves into slavery.

Slave protest

Throughout history human beings have objected to being enslaved and have responded in myriad ways ranging from individual shirking, alcoholism, flight, and suicide to arson, murdering owners, and mass rebellion. Perhaps the most common individual response to enslavement was sluggishness, passivity, and indifference. A nearly universal stereotype of the slave was of a lying, lazy, dull brute who had to be kicked or whipped. There probably were three mutually reinforcing factors at work: an unconscious response to overcontrol and absence of freedom, a conscious effort to sabotage the master's desires, and a conditioned response to the expectation of stereotypical behaviour. Some owners tried to overcome such behaviour by a system of incentives or by strict regimentation, such as the gang system, but historically they were in a minority. Less frequent was suicide. A number of slaves are known to have jumped overboard during the Middle Passage because they feared that the transatlantic voyage was taking them to be eaten by witches or barbarians, a fate that seemed worse than drowning.

Flight, either individually or in groups, was one of the most visible forms of protest against enslavement. The rates of flight, which varied greatly from society to society throughout history, usually depended less on individual slave-owner conduct than on the likelihood of success. Immediate conditions, such as the brutality of an overseer or master or a temporary lapse of supervision, often precipitated slave flight, but willingness to undertake such a form of rebellion against the system was usually determined by such factors as the accessibility of refuge or the ability to blend in with the free population (some societies marked slaves to inhibit such blending). Slave flight was infrequent in societies such as the peacetime American South or in West Africa, where a refuge of freedom was very distant. In East Africa, where flight was curtailed by slave owners united in their desire to prevent it in spite of a high demand for labour, runaways joined neighbouring communities and then raided their former masters. For more than two centuries fugitive slaves in Brazil known as Maroons set up independent polities, or *quilombos*, that lasted for years. Maroon communities were found in many other places in Latin America and the Caribbean as well. In Muscovy, where most of the slaves were natives or of similar origin (Poles and Swedes), where there was an open frontier, and where masters had no compunction about taking in other owners' slaves, the rate of flight was very high, and as many as a quarter to a third of the slaves ran away. In China flight by male slaves was also common. During the American Revolution, when the slave owners were occupied with fighting the British, fugitive slaves numbered in the tens of thousands.

Direct, personal attacks on slave owners often were determined by the nature of the slave regime. Where owners believed they enjoyed automatic sexual access to female slaves, both the women and their "husbands" were prone to respond by assaulting the owners or their agents. In Hausaland, killings by concubines instilled great fear in slave owners. Where slaves were driven, assault on the drivers was not an uncommon response. As a result, overseers in the Mississippi valley feared for their lives and constantly carried arms.

The most dramatic form of slave protest was outright rebellion. Slave uprisings varied enormously in frequency, size, intensity, and duration. Perhaps the calmest of all known slave societies were those of West Africa, where the predominance of women and children caused rebellions to be very few. Slave rebellions in North America were also noticeably few and involved only a handful of participants: the New York revolt of 1712, the Stono rebellion of South Carolina (1739), the Gabriel plot in Richmond, Virginia (1800), the Denmark Vesey conspiracy in Charleston, South Carolina (1822), and Nat Turner's uprising in Jerusalem, Virginia (1831), are the best known. Southern slave uprisings were so few and so small because of the absolute certainty that they would be brutally repressed. The Turner rebellion is usually given as the reason for the marked increase in the severity of the slave regime after 1831.

Other slave revolts were on a much grander scale than those of West Africa and North America. One of the most famous slave uprisings was the Gladiatorial War led by Spartacus against Rome in 73-71 BCE. The Spartacus rebellion was brutally repressed (the roads leading into Rome were lined with gibbets from which rebel corpses hung). Slaves led the Khlopko and Bolotnikov uprisings in Muscovy in 1603 and 1606, respectively, a time of dynastic crisis. Another great slave rebellion was that of the Zanj (black slaves imported from Zanzibar) in Iraq and Khuzistan in the years 869-883. It was joined by fair-skinned slaves as well and was on a larger scale than the Spartacus revolt. Slave rebellion in China at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century was so extensive that owners eventually eschewed male slaves and converted the institution into a female-dominated one.

Slave rebellions occurred in every slave society in the Americas from the 16th century onward. Prominent slave revolts occurred in Jamaica in 1760, 1798, and 1831-32, in Barbados in 1816, and in British Guiana in

1823. Perhaps the most famous Caribbean rebellion, in Saint-Domingue, began in 1791 and was subsequently led to victory by the freedman Toussaint-Louverture; it produced the emancipation of its slaves while the French were preoccupied with their own revolution and ultimately led to the independent state of Haiti.

Slave culture

The institution of slavery usually tried to deny its victims their native cultural identity. Torn out of their own cultural milieus, they were expected to abandon their heritage and to adopt at least part of their enslavers' culture. Nonetheless, studies have shown that there were aspects of slave culture that differed from the master culture. Some of these have been interpreted as a form of resistance to oppression, while other aspects were clearly survivals of a native culture in the new society. Most of what is known about this topic comes from the circum-Caribbean world, but analogous developments may have occurred wherever alien slaves were concentrated in numbers sufficient to prevent their complete absorption by the host slave-owning or slave society. Thus slave culture was probably very different on large plantations from what it was on small farms or in urban households, where slave culture (and especially Creole slave culture) could hardly have avoided being very similar to the master culture. Slave cultures grew up within the perimeters of the masters' monopoly of power but separate from the masters' institutions.

Religion, which performed the multiple function of explanation, prediction, control, and communion, seems to have been a particularly fruitful area for the creation of slave culture. Africans perceived all misfortunes, including enslavement, as the result of sorcery, and their religious practices and beliefs, which were often millennial, were formulated as a way of coping with it. Myalism was the first religious movement to appeal to all ethnic groups in Jamaica, Vodou in Haiti was the product of African culture slightly refashioned on that island, and syncretic Afro-Christian religions and rituals appeared nearly everywhere throughout the New World. Slave religions usually had a supreme being and a host of lesser spirits brought from Africa, borrowed from the Amerindians, and created in response to local conditions. There were no firm boundaries between the secular and the sacred, which infused all things and activities. At least initially African slaves universally believed that posthumously they would return to their lands and rejoin their friends.

Black slaves preserved some of their culture in the New World. African medicine was practiced in America by slaves. The poisoning of masters and other hated individuals was a particularly African method of coping with evil. Throughout the circum-Caribbean world slaves and free blacks had electoral procedures, adapted from West African customs, to choose governors, sheriffs, and judges to maintain order among themselves. Objects of material culture, such as rugs, mats, baskets, thatched roofs, and walking canes, were modeled on African examples. Nevertheless, relatively few African social practices or plastic arts survived in the New World. On the other hand, Afro-American music and dance are known to have many African roots, and they differed dramatically from the practices of the European master culture; the use of drum and banjo were especially significant. Songs and spirituals borrowed their strong call-and-response patterns from the West African style. Furthermore, slaves created tales to amuse themselves, and the African element is most evident in animal tales; the tar-baby story is among the best known of the genre. Afro-American stories and songs often featured the devil, who was a demon and a trickster, terrifying, a friend in need, and a source of mirth.

Slave culture also developed beliefs and customs that were at odds with those of the master culture. One such belief was that what the masters called theft was something else; thus stealing from the master was not theft at all but merely a process of channeling his property from one use to another, as in taking his corn and feeding it to his pigs. Polygamous domestic arrangements were a further aspect of slave culture brought from Africa. Yet another aspect of slave culture, especially prevalent in the Caribbean, involved the market. Slaves there were often required to provide their own food, which they raised on provision grounds. If they had any surplus, they were permitted by their owners to sell it in the market. As a result, slaves developed an autonomy and an individualism that contrasted starkly with the rigid control of the work gang system and the putative stifling control of slave law.

Additional Reading

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Slavery in the New World

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Slavery

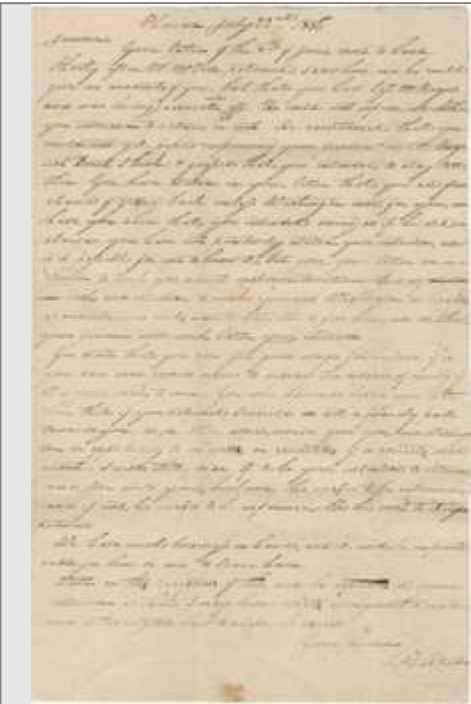
Slavery, condition in which one human being was owned by another. A slave was considered by law as property, or chattel, and was deprived of most of the rights ordinarily held by free persons.



slavery

Slaves picking cotton in Georgia.

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letter to a freed slave

An 1836 letter from landowner Levi F. Hall of Florida, Missouri, to Jemima Hall, the wife of his slave Washington. Jemima had been freed by her owner, Mary Davidson Rodgers, presumably in 1836 when the Rodgers family moved from Missouri to Illinois. Despite pleas from her husband to

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There is no consensus on what a slave was or on how the institution of slavery should be defined. Nevertheless, there is general agreement among historians, anthropologists, economists, sociologists, and others who study slavery that most of the following characteristics should be present in order to term a person a slave. The slave was a species of property; thus, he belonged to someone else. In some societies slaves were considered movable property, in others immovable property, like real estate. They were objects of the law, not its subjects. Thus, like an ox or an ax, the slave was not ordinarily held responsible for what he did. He was not personally liable for torts or contracts. The slave usually had few rights and always fewer than his owner, but there were not many societies in which he had absolutely none. As there are limits in most societies on the extent to which animals may be abused, so there were limits in most societies on how much a slave could be abused. The slave was removed from lines of natal descent. Legally, and often socially, he had no kin. No relatives could stand up for his rights or get vengeance for him. As an “outsider,” “marginal individual,” or “socially dead person” in the society where he was enslaved, his rights to participate in political decision making and other social activities were fewer than those enjoyed by his owner. The product of a slave’s labour could be claimed by someone else, who also frequently had the right to control his physical reproduction.

Slavery was a form of dependent labour performed by a nonfamily member. The slave was deprived of personal liberty and the right to move about geographically as he desired. There

return to Missouri, Jemima remained in Illinois with the Rodgers family until her death in 1875.

The Newberry Library, Gift of Mrs. W. F. Schweitzer, 1950 (A Britannica Publishing Partner □)

were likely to be limits on his capacity to make choices with regard to his occupation and sexual partners as well. Slavery was usually, but not always, involuntary. If not all of these characterizations in their most restrictive forms applied to a slave, the slave regime in that place is likely to be characterized as “mild”; if almost all of them did, then it ordinarily would be

characterized as “severe.”

Slaves were generated in many ways. Probably the most frequent was capture in war, either by design, as a form of incentive to warriors, or as an accidental by-product, as a way of disposing of enemy troops or civilians. Others were kidnapped on slave-raiding or piracy expeditions. Many slaves were the offspring of slaves. Some people were enslaved as a punishment for crime or debt, others were sold into slavery by their parents, other relatives, or even spouses, sometimes to satisfy debts, sometimes to escape starvation. A variant on the selling of children was the exposure, either real or fictitious, of unwanted children, who were then rescued by others and made slaves. Another source of slavery was self-sale, undertaken sometimes to obtain an elite position, sometimes to escape destitution.

Slavery existed in a large number of past societies whose general characteristics are well known. It was rare among primitive peoples, such as the hunter-gatherer societies, because for slavery to flourish, social differentiation or stratification was essential. Also essential was an economic surplus, for slaves were often consumption goods who themselves had to be maintained rather than productive assets who generated income for their owner. Surplus was also essential in slave systems where the owners expected economic gain from slave ownership.

Ordinarily there had to be a perceived labour shortage, for otherwise it is unlikely that most people would bother to acquire or to keep slaves. Free land, and more generally, open resources, were often a prerequisite for slavery; in most cases where there were no open resources, non-slaves could be found who would fulfill the same social functions at lower cost. Last, some centralized governmental institutions willing to enforce slave laws had to exist, or else the property aspects of slavery were likely to be chimerical. Most of these conditions had to be present in order for slavery to exist in a society; if they all were, until the abolition movement of the 19th century swept throughout most of the world, it was almost certain that slavery would be present. Although slavery existed almost everywhere, it seems to have been especially important in the development of two of the world’s major civilizations, Western (including ancient Greece and Rome) and Islamic.

There have been two basic types of slavery throughout recorded history. The most common has been what is called household, patriarchal, or domestic slavery. Although domestic slaves occasionally worked outside the household, for example, in haying or harvesting, their primary function was that of menials who served their owners in their homes or wherever else the owners might be, such as in military service. Slaves often were a consumption-oriented status symbol for their owners, who in many societies spent much of their surplus on slaves. Household slaves sometimes merged in varying degrees with the families of their owners, so that boys became adopted sons or women became concubines or wives who gave birth to heirs. Temple slavery, state

slavery, and military slavery were relatively rare and distinct from domestic slavery, but in a very broad outline they can be categorized as the household slaves of a temple or the state.

The other major type of slavery was productive slavery. It was relatively infrequent and occurred primarily in Classical Athenian Greece and Rome and in the post-Columbian circum-Caribbean New World. It also was found in 9th-century Iraq, among the Kwakiutl Indians of the American Northwest, and in a few areas of sub-Saharan Africa in the 19th century. Although slaves also were employed in the household, slavery in all of those societies seems to have existed predominantly to produce marketable commodities in mines or on plantations.

A major theoretical issue is the relationship between productive slavery and the status of a society as a slave or a slave-owning society. In a slave society, slaves composed a significant portion (at least 20–30 percent) of the total population, and much of that society's energies were mobilized toward getting and keeping slaves. In addition the institution of slavery had a significant impact on the society's institutions, such as the family, and on its social thought, law, and economy. It seems clear that it was quite possible for a slave society to exist without productive slavery; the known historical examples were concentrated in Africa and Asia. It is also clear that most of the slave societies have been concentrated in Western (including Greece and Rome) and Islamic civilizations. In a slave-owning society, slaves were present but in smaller numbers, and they were much less the focus of the society's energies.

Slavery was a species of dependent labour differentiated from other forms primarily by the fact that in any society it was the most degrading and most severe. Slavery was the prototype of a relationship defined by domination and power. But throughout the centuries man has invented other forms of dependent labour besides slavery, including serfdom, indentured labour, and peonage. The term serfdom is much overused, often where it is not appropriate (always as an appellation of opprobrium). In the past a serf usually was an agriculturalist, whereas, depending upon the society, a slave could be employed in almost any occupation. Canonically, serfdom was the dependent condition of much of the western and central European peasantry from the time of the decline of the Roman Empire until the era of the French Revolution. This included a "second enserfment" that swept over central and some of eastern Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. Russia did not know the "first enserfment"; serfdom began there gradually in the mid-15th century, was completed by 1649, and lasted until 1906. Whether the term serfdom appropriately describes the condition of the peasantry in other contexts is a matter of vigorous contention. Be that as it may, the serf was also distinguished from the slave by the fact that he was usually the subject of the law—i.e., he had some rights, whereas the slave, the object of the law, had significantly fewer rights. The serf, moreover, was usually bound to the land (the most significant exception was the Russian serf between about 1700 and 1861), whereas the slave was always bound to his owner; i.e., he had to live where his owner told him to, and he often could be sold by his owner at any time. The serf usually owned his means of production (grain, livestock, implements) except the land, whereas the slave owned nothing, often not even the clothes on his back. The serf's right to marry off his lord's estate often was restricted, but the master's interference in his reproductive and family life ordinarily was much less than was the case for the slave. Serfs could be called upon by the state to pay taxes, to perform *corvée* labour on roads, and to serve in the army, but slaves usually were exempt from all of those obligations.

A person became an indentured servant by borrowing money and then voluntarily agreeing to work off the debt during a specified term. In some societies indentured servants probably differed little from debt slaves (i.e., persons who initially were unable to pay off obligations and thus were forced to work them off at an amount per year specified by law). Debt slaves, however, were regarded as criminals (essentially thieves) and thus liable to harsher treatment. Perhaps as many as half of all the white settlers in North America were indentured servants, who agreed to work for someone (the purchaser of the indenture) upon arrival to pay for their passage. Some indentured servants alleged that they were treated worse than slaves; the economic logic of the situation was that slave owners thought of their slaves as a long-term investment whose value would drop if maltreated, whereas the short-term (typically four years) indentured servants could be abused almost to death because their masters had only a brief interest in them. Practices varied, but indenture contracts sometimes specified that the servants were to be set free with a sum of money, sometimes a plot of land, perhaps even a spouse, whereas for manumitted slaves the terms usually depended more on the generosity of the owner.

Peons were either persons forced to work off debts or criminals. Peons, who were the Latin American variant of debt slaves, were forced to work for their creditors to pay off what they owed. They tended to merge with felons because people in both categories were considered criminals, and that was especially true in societies where money fines were the main sanction and form of restitution for crimes. Thus, the felon who could not pay his fine was an insolvent debtor. The debt peon had to work for his creditor, and the labour of the criminal peon was sold by the state to a third party. Peons had even less recourse to the law for bad treatment than did indentured servants, and the terms of manumission for the former typically were less favourable than for the latter.

Historical survey

The origins of slavery are lost to human memory. It is sometimes hypothesized that at some moment it was decided that persons detained for a crime or as a result of warfare would be more useful if put to work in some way rather than if killed outright and discarded or eaten. But both if and when that first occurred is unknown.

Slave-owning societies

Slavery is known to have existed as early as the Shang dynasty (18th–12th century BCE) in China. It has been studied thoroughly in ancient Han China (206 BCE–25 CE), where perhaps 5 percent of the population was enslaved. Slavery continued to be a feature of Chinese society down to the 20th century. For most of that period it appears that slaves were generated in the same ways they were elsewhere, including capture in war, slave raiding, and the sale of insolvent debtors. In addition, the Chinese practiced self-sale into slavery, the sale of women and children (to satisfy debts or because the seller could not feed them), and the sale of the relatives of executed criminals. Finally, kidnapping seems to have produced a regular flow of slaves at some times. The go-between or middleman was an important figure in the sale of local people into slavery; he provided the distance that made such slaves into outsiders, for the purchasers did not know their origins.

Chinese family boundaries were relatively permeable, and some owners established kinlike relations with

their slaves; male slaves were appointed as heirs when no natural offspring existed. As was also the case in other slave-owning societies, slaves in China were often luxury consumption items who constituted a drain on the economy. The reasons China never developed into a slave society are many and complex, but certainly an abundance of non-slave labour at low prices was one of the major ones.

Korea had a very large slave population, ranging from a third to half of the entire population for most of the millennium between the Silla period and the mid-18th century. Most of the Korean slaves were indigenously generated. In spite of their numbers, slaves seem to have had little impact on other institutions, and thus the society can be categorized as a slave-owning one.

Slavery existed in ancient India, where it is recorded in the Sanskrit *Laws of Manu* of the 1st century BCE. The institution was little documented until the British colonials in the 19th century made it an object of study because of their desire to abolish it. In 1841 there were an estimated eight million or nine million slaves in India, many of whom were agrestic or predial slaves—that is, slaves who were attached to the land they worked on but who nevertheless could be alienated from it. Malabar had the largest proportion of slaves, about 15 percent of the total population. The agrestic slaves initially were subjugated communities. The remainder of the slaves was recruited individually by purchase from dealers or parents or by self-sale of the starving, and they can be classified as household slaves. Slavery in Hindu India was complicated by the slave owners' ritual need to know the origins of their slaves, which explains why most of them were of indigenous origin. Although there were exceptions, slaves were owned primarily for prestige.

Slavery was widely practiced in other areas of Asia as well. A quarter to a third of the population of some areas of Thailand and Burma (Myanmar) were slaves in the 17th through the 19th centuries and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, respectively. But not enough is known about them to say that they definitely were slave societies.

Other societies in the Philippines, Nepal, Malaya, Indonesia, and Japan are known to have had slavery from ancient until fairly recent times. The same was true among the various peoples inhabiting the regions of Central Asia: the peoples of Sogdiana, Khorezm, and other advanced civilizations; the Mongols, the Kalmyks, the Kazakhs; and the numerous Turkic peoples, most of whom converted to Islam.

In the New World some of the best-documented slave-owning societies were the Klamath and Pawnee and the fishing societies, such as the Yurok, that lived along the coast from what is now Alaska to California. Life was easy in many of those societies, and slaves are known to have sometimes been consumption goods that were simply killed in potlatches.

Other Amerindians, such as the Creek of Georgia, the Comanche of Texas, the Callinago of Dominica, the Tupinambá of Brazil, the Inca of the Andes, and the Tehuelche of Patagonia, also owned slaves. Among the Aztecs of Mexico, slavery generally seems to have been relatively mild. People got into the institution through self-sale and capture and could buy their way out relatively easily. Slaves were often used as porters in the absence of draft animals in Mesoamerica. The fate of other slaves was less pleasant: chattels purchased from the Mayans and others were sacrificed in massive numbers. Some of the sacrifices may have been eaten by the social elite.

In England about 10 percent of the population entered in the Domesday Book in 1086 were slaves, with the proportion reaching as much as 20 percent in some places. Slaves were also prominent in Scandinavia during the Viking era, 800–1050 CE, when slaves for use at home and for sale in the international slave markets were a major object of raids. Slaves also were present in significant numbers in Scandinavia both before and after the Viking era.

Continental Europe—France, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, and Russia—all knew slavery. Russia was essentially founded as a by-product of slave raiding by the Vikings passing from Scandinavia to Byzantium in the 9th century, and slavery remained a major institution there until the early 1720s, when the state converted the household slaves into house serfs in order to put them on the tax rolls. House serfs were freed from their lords by an edict of Tsar Alexander II in 1861. Many scholars argue that the Soviets reinstituted a form of state slavery in the Gulag camps that flourished until 1956.

Slavery was much in evidence in the Middle East from the beginning of recorded history. It was treated as a prominent institution in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi of about 750 BCE. Slaves were present in ancient Egypt and are known to have been murdered to accompany their deceased owners into the afterlife. It once was believed that slaves built the great pyramids, but contemporary scholarly opinion is that the pyramids were constructed by peasants when they were not occupied by agriculture. Slaves also are mentioned prominently in the Bible among the Hebrews in Palestine and their neighbours.

Slaves were owned in all Islamic societies, both sedentary and nomadic, ranging from Arabia in the centre to North Africa in the west and to what is now Pakistan and Indonesia in the east. Some Islamic states, such as the Ottoman Empire, the Crimean Khanate, and the Sokoto caliphate, must be termed slave societies because slaves there were very important numerically as well as a focus of the polities' energies.

Slaves have been owned in Black Africa throughout recorded history. In many areas there were large-scale slave societies, while in others there were slave-owning societies. **Slavery was practiced everywhere even before the rise of Islam**, and Black slaves exported from Africa were widely traded throughout the Islamic world. Approximately 18 million Africans were delivered into the Islamic trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trades between 650 and 1905. In the second half of the 15th century Europeans began to trade along the west coast of Africa, and by 1867 between 7 million and 10 million Africans had been shipped as slaves to the New World. Although some areas of Africa were depleted by slave raiding, on balance the African population grew after the establishment of the transatlantic slave trade because of new food crops introduced from the New World, particularly manioc, corn (maize), and possibly peanuts (groundnuts). The relationship between African and New World slavery was highly complementary. African slave owners demanded primarily women and children for labour and lineage incorporation and tended to kill males because they were troublesome and likely to flee. The transatlantic trade, on the other hand, demanded primarily adult males for labour and thus saved from certain death many adult males who otherwise would have been slaughtered outright by their African captors. After the end of the transatlantic trade, a few African societies at the end of the 19th century put captured males to productive work as slaves, but this usually was not the case before that time.

Slave societies

The first known major slave society was that of Athens. In the early Archaic period the elite worked its estates with the labour of fellow citizens in bondage (often for debt). After the lawgiver Solon abolished citizen slavery about 594 BCE, wealthy Athenians came to rely on enslaved peoples from outside Attica. The prolonged wars with the Persians and other peoples provided many slaves, but the majority of slaves were acquired through regular trade with non-Greek peoples around the Aegean. At the time of Classical Athens (the 5th through the 3rd century BCE) slaves constituted about a third of the population. A particularly noteworthy locus of slave employment was the Laurium silver mines, where private individuals could pick out a lode and put their slaves to mining it. As in all other slave societies, it was the profitability of slavery that determined its preeminence in Athens. (Also important were political conditions that made the gross exploitation of citizens impossible.) Slaves were responsible for the prosperity of Athens and the leisure of the aristocrats, who had time to create the high culture now considered the beginning of Western civilization. The existence of large-scale slavery was also responsible, it seems logical to believe, for the Athenians' thoughts on freedom that are considered a central part of the Western heritage. Athenian slave society was finally destroyed by Philip II of Macedonia at the battle of Chaeronea (338 BCE), when, on the motion of Lysurgus, many (but not all) slaves were freed.

The next major slave society was Roman Italy between about the 2nd century BCE and the 4th century CE. Initially, Rome was a polity consisting primarily of small farmers. But the process of creating the empire took them away from their farms for extended periods, and the prolonged wars of conquest in Spain and the eastern Mediterranean during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE created a great flood of captives. Nothing was more logical than to put the captives to work farming, especially the olives and grapes that created much of the prosperity of the late republic and the principate. Slaves and freedmen were responsible for much of the empire's commodity production, and in the early principate they ran its governmental bureaus as well. The conditions were right to put the captives to work: private ownership of land; developed commodity production and markets; a perceived shortage of internal labour supply; and an appropriate moral, political, and legal climate. Roughly 30 percent of the population was enslaved. Roman slave society ended as the slaves were legally converted into *coloni*, or serfs, and the lands became populated and the frontiers so remote that finding great numbers of outsider slaves was increasingly difficult.

Some lesser Islamic slave societies are also of interest. One is the Baghdad caliphate founded in the 7th and lasting through the 10th century. Many tens of thousands of military captives were imported from Sogdiana, Khazaria, and other Central Asian locales. In the 9th and 10th centuries several tens of thousands of Black Zanj slaves were imported from Zanzibar to Lower Iraq, where they constituted more than half the total population and were put to work to clear saline lands for irrigation and to cultivate sugar. More long-term was the slavery practiced in the Crimean Khanate between roughly 1475 and its liquidation by the Russian empress Catherine the Great in 1783. The Crimean Tatar society was based on raiding the neighbouring Slavic and Caucasian sedentary societies and selling the captives into the slave markets of Eurasia. Approximately 75 percent of the Crimean population consisted of slaves or freedmen, and much of the free population was highly predatory, engaged either in the gathering of slaves or in the selling of them. It is known that for every slave the Crimeans sold in the market, they killed outright several other people during

their raids, and a couple more died on the way to the slave market. The reasons for the transition of the Crimean Khanate from a slave-owning society to a slave society have not been studied in detail. Probable reasons, however, include the combination of high demand for slaves throughout the Islamic world, the defenselessness of the sedentary agricultural Slavs and others, and the existence of a relatively poor class of Crimean horsemen, who were led by a predatory elite that got rich by slave raiding. Crimean Tatar slave raids into Muscovy were greatly curtailed by the building of a series of walls along the frontier in the years 1636–53 and ultimately by the liquidation of the khanate in 1783.

It is probable that the Ottoman Empire, and especially its centre in Turkey, should be termed a slave society. Slaves from both the white Slavic north and the Black African south flowed into Turkish cities for half a millennium after the Turks seized control of much of the Balkans in the 14th century. The proportion of the population that was slave ranged from about one-fifth in Istanbul, the capital, to much less in remoter provincial areas. Perhaps only people such as the slave owners of the circum-Caribbean sugar islands and the American South were as preoccupied with slaves as were the Ottomans.

Slaves in the Ottoman Empire served in various capacities. They were janissary soldiers (*see below*), and they ran the empire, manned its ships, generated much of its handicraft product, and served as domestic servants and in harems. Contemporaries believed that the absolute power of the ruler was based on his military and administrative slaves. The Tanzimat enlightenment movement of the mid-19th century initiated the abolition of slavery; by the 1890s only a few slaves were being smuggled illegally into the empire, and the slave population was greatly reduced.

Other prominent Islamic slave societies were on the east coast of Africa in the 19th century. The Arab-Swahili slave systems have been well studied, and it is known that, depending on the date, 65 to 90 percent of the population of Zanzibar was enslaved. Close to 90 percent of the population on the Kenya coast was also enslaved, and in Madagascar half the population was enslaved. It may be assumed that similar situations prevailed elsewhere in the vicinity and also earlier, but studies to verify the proposition have not been undertaken.

Another notable Islamic slave society was that of the Sokoto caliphate formed by Hausas in sub-Saharan Africa (northern Nigeria and Cameroon) in the 19th century. At least half the population was enslaved. That was only the most notable of the Fulani jihad states of the western and central Sudan, where between 1750 and 1900 from one- to two-thirds of the entire population consisted of slaves. In Islamic Ghana, between 1076 and 1600, about a third of the population were slaves. The same was true among other early states of the western Sudan, including Mali (1200–1500), Segou (1720–1861), and Songhai (1464–1720). It should be noted that slavery was prominent in Ghana and Mali, and presumably elsewhere in Africa in areas for which information is not available, long before the beginnings of the transatlantic slave trade. The population of the notorious slave-trading state of the central Sudan, Ouidah (Whydah), was half-slave in the 19th century. It was about a third in Kanem (1600–1800) and perhaps 40 percent in Bornu (1580–1890). Most slaves probably were acquired by raiding neighbouring peoples, but others entered slavery because of criminal convictions or defaulting on debts (often not their own); subsequently, many of those people were sold into the international slave trade. After the limiting and then abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, a number of

these African societies put slaves to work in activities such as mining gold and raising peanuts, coconuts (palm oil), sesame, and millet for the market.

Among some of the various Islamic Berber Tuareg peoples of the Sahara and Sahel, slavery persisted at least until 1975. The proportions of slaves ranged from around 15 percent among the Adrar to perhaps 75 percent among the Gurma. In Senegambia, between 1300 and 1900, about a third of the population consisted of slaves. In Sierra Leone in the 19th century close to half the population was enslaved. In the Vai Paramount chiefdoms in the 19th century as much as three-quarters of the population consisted of slaves. Among the Ashanti and Yoruba a third were enslaved. In the 19th century over half the population consisted of slaves among the Duala of the Cameroon, the Ibo and other peoples of the lower Niger, the Kongo, and the Kasanje kingdom and Chokwe of Angola.

Slavery in the Americas

The best-known slave societies were those of the circum-Caribbean world. Slave imports to the islands of the Caribbean began in the early 16th century. Initially the islands often were settled as well by numerous indentured labourers and other Europeans, but following the triumph after 1645 of the sugar revolution (initially undertaken because superior Virginia tobacco had left the Barbadian planters with nothing to sell) and after the nature of the disease climate became known to Europeans, they came to be inhabited almost exclusively by imported African slaves. In time the estate owners moved to England, and the sugar plantations were managed by sometimes unstable and unsavoury Europeans who, with the aid of Black overseers and drivers, controlled masses of slaves. About two-thirds of all slaves shipped across the Atlantic ended up in sugar colonies. By 1680 in Barbados the average plantation had about 60 slaves, and in Jamaica in 1832 about 150. The sugar plantations were among the contemporary world's largest and most profitable enterprises, paying about 10 percent on invested capital and on some occasions, such as in Barbados in the 1650s, as much as 40 to 50 percent. The proportions of slaves on the islands ranged from more than a third in Cuba, which went into the sugar and gang labour business on a large scale only after the local planters had gained control in 1789, to 90 percent and more on Jamaica in 1730, Antigua in 1775, and Grenada up to 1834.



slavery

Slaves cutting sugarcane on the Caribbean island of Antigua, aquatint from *Ten Views of the Island of Antigua* by William Clark, 1832.

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Slaves were of varying importance in Mesoamerica and on the South American continent. Initially slaves were imported because of a labour shortage, aggravated by the high death rate of the indigenous population after the introduction of European diseases in the early 16th century. They were brought in at first to mine gold, and they were shifted to silver mining or simply let go when gold was exhausted in the mid-16th century. In Brazil, where sugar had been tried even before its planting in the Caribbean, the coffee bush was imported from Arabia or Ethiopia via Indonesia, and it had an impact similar to that of sugar in the Caribbean. Around 1800 about half the population of Brazil consisted of slaves, but that percentage declined to

about 33 percent in 1850 and to 15 percent after the shutting off of imports around 1850 combined with free immigration to raise the proportion of Europeans. In some parts of Brazil, such as Pernambuco, some two-thirds of the population consisted of Africans and their offspring.

The final circum-Caribbean slave society was what became the southern United States. Slaves first were brought to Virginia in 1619. Subsequently, Africans were transshipped to North America from the Caribbean in increasing numbers. Initially, however, the English relied for their dependent labour primarily on indentured servants from the mother country. But in the two decades of the 1660s and 1670s the laws of slave ownership were clarified (for example, Africans who converted to Christianity did no longer have to be manumitted), and the price of servants may have increased because of rising wage rates in prospering England; soon thereafter African slaves replaced English indentured labourers. Tobacco initially was the profitable crop that occupied most slaves in the Chesapeake. The invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 changed the situation, and thereafter cotton culture created a huge demand for slaves, especially after the opening of the New South (Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas). By 1850 nearly two-thirds of the plantation slaves were engaged in the production of cotton. Cotton could be grown profitably on smaller plots than could sugar, with the result that in 1860 the average cotton plantation had only about 35 slaves, not all of whom produced cotton. During the reign of "King Cotton," about 40 percent of the Southern population consisted of Black slaves; the percentage of slaves rose as high as 64 percent in South Carolina in 1720 and 55 percent in Mississippi in 1810 and 1860. More than 36 percent of all the New World slaves in 1825 were in the southern United States. Like Rome and the Sokoto caliphate, the South was totally transformed by the presence of slavery. Slavery generated profits comparable to those from other investments and was only ended as a consequence of the War Between the States.

The international slave trade

Organized commerce began in the Neolithic Period (New Stone Age), and it may be assumed that slaves were not far behind high-value items such as amber and salt in becoming commodities. Even among relatively simple peoples one can trace the international slave trade. Thus such a trade was going on among the peoples of Siberia before the arrival of the Russians in the 16th and 17th centuries. The slaves so traded were neighbouring people captured in warfare, who were then shipped to distant points where they would be without kin and whence they would be unlikely to flee. Similar commerce in slaves occurred on nearly all continents and provided the bulk of household slaves throughout the world.

The international slave trades that provided much of the chattel for the slave societies flowed out of the great "population reservoirs." Two such reservoirs were the Slavs and contiguous agriculturalist Iranians from antiquity to the 19th century and the sub-Saharan Africans from around the beginning of the Common Era to the middle of the 20th century. A third such reservoir probably was the Germanic, Celtic, and Romance peoples who lived north of the Roman Republic and Empire and who half a millennium later became the victims of the Vikings' slave raids. The dynamics of these raids were as follows: A large demand for slave labour prompted neighbouring peoples (typically migratory or nomadic in habit) to prey on the sedentary agriculturalists living in the reservoir. The raiders developed techniques, of which surprise was perhaps the major one, that put the settled peoples at a disadvantage, for they never knew when and where the raiders

might strike. Populations in the reservoir could be completely depleted, as happened to the East Slavs living in the steppe south of the Oka and between the Volga and the Dnepr rivers from 1240 to the 1590s, or they could migrate half a continent away to escape the slave raiders, as did the Ndembu in Africa. Ruthenians, frontier Poles, Caucasians, and numerous African peoples were sorely depleted by slave raids. One alternative was to fight back, as did the Muscovite Russians and the Baya of Adamawa (now northern Cameroon in West Africa), and the consequence in both instances was the creation of an authoritarian garrison state.

The international slave trades developed into elaborate networks. For example, in the 9th and 10th centuries Vikings and Russian merchants took East Slavic slaves into the Baltic. They were then gathered in Denmark for further transshipment and sold to Jewish and Arabic slave traders, who took them to Verdun and León. There some of the males were castrated. From those places the slaves were sold to harems throughout Moorish Spain and North Africa. In the 9th century the Baghdad caliphate got slaves from western Europe via Marseille, Venice, and Prague; Slavic and Turkic slaves from eastern Europe and Central Asia via Derbent, Itil, Khorezm, and Samarkand; and African slaves via Mombasa, Zanzibar, the Sudan, and the Sahara. The Mongols in the 13th century brought their slaves first to Karakorum, whence they were sold throughout Asia, and then later to Sarai on the Lower Volga, whence they were retailed throughout much of Eurasia. Following the breakup of the Golden Horde, the Crimean Tatars took their chattel to Kefe (Feodosiya) in Crimea, whence it was transported across the Black Sea and sold throughout the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere. Arabs developed similar supply networks out of Black Africa across the Sahara, across the Red Sea (from Ethiopia and Somalia), and out of East Africa, which supplied the Islamic world and the Indian Ocean region with human chattel.



John Raphael Smith: *Slave Trade*

Slave Trade, print on paper by John Raphael Smith after George Morland, 1762–1812; in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
(RP-P-1969-83)

Beginning about 1500, a similar process occurred along the coast of West Africa to supply the transatlantic slave trade. The Africans were captured by other Africans in raids and then transported to the coast; one may assume that the number of casualties of African slave raiding was nearly as high as that of Crimean Tatar slave raiding. The captives, primarily adult males, were assembled on the coast by African rulers and kept in holding pens until wholesaled to European ship captains who sailed up and down the coast looking for slave cargo. (As stated above, the women and children often were not sent to the coast for export but were kept by the Africans themselves, often for incorporation into their lineages.) African rulers, who did not allow the Europeans to move inland, often conducted their wholesale business on the coast, such as at Ouidah in Dahomey

(now Benin). (Because of the disease climate the Europeans also were reluctant, even unable, to move inland until the mid-19th century.) But African rulers did everything they could to encourage the European sea captains to come to their port.

Once a ship was loaded, the trip, known as “the Middle Passage,” usually to Brazil or an island in the Caribbean, was a matter of a few weeks to several months. Between 1500 and the end of the 19th century the

time of the voyage diminished considerably. That change was important, because death rates, which ranged from around 10 to more than 20 percent on the Middle Passage, were directly proportional to the length of the voyage. The ship captains had every interest in the health of their cargo, for they were paid only for slaves delivered alive. The death rates among the European captains and crew engaged in the slave trade were at least as high as those among their cargo on the Middle Passage. Of the slave-ship crews that embarked from Liverpool in 1787, less than half returned alive.

Arriving in Brazil or the Caribbean islands, the slaves were sold at auction. The slave auctions were elaborate markets in which the prices of the slaves were determined. The auctions told the captains and their superiors what kind of cargo was in demand, usually adult males. Credit almost always was part of the transaction, and inability to collect was one of the major reasons companies went bankrupt. After the auction the slave was delivered to the new owner, who then put him to work. That also began the period of “seasoning” for the slave, the period of about a year or so when he either succumbed to the disease environment of the New World or survived it. Many slaves landed on the North American mainland before the early 18th century had already survived the seasoning process in the Caribbean.

It can be assumed that the other international slave trades were comparable in many respects to the transatlantic one, but they have not been adequately studied.

Ways of ending slavery

Slavery came to an end in numerous ways. Household slavery ended because of an exhaustion of supplies, because slavery evolved into some other system of dependent labour, because it withered away, or because it was formally abolished. Productive slavery came to an end for the additional reasons that it ceased to be profitable or that it was abolished by warfare or the threat of warfare.

Throughout history there have been people who in one way or another believed that slavery was not a good or natural condition. Jean Bodin (1530–96), the French founder of antislavery thought, for example, condemned the institution as immoral and counterproductive and advocated that no group of men should be excluded from the body politic. Nevertheless, remarkably few people found the institution of slavery to be unnatural or immoral until the second half of the 18th century. Until that time Christians commonly thought of sin as a kind of slavery rather than slavery itself as a sin. When concern was expressed for slaves, it was for their good care, not for their unfree status.

Frequently, when slavery passed from the scene, it did so with little fanfare. In most societies, such as ancient Babylonia, Israel, Egypt, or Athens, the institution of slavery had little or no connection with the society’s rise or demise. In Rome, on the other hand, slavery began to yield to tenancy and the antecedents of serfdom before the fall of the empire, as the diminishing supply of slaves and the rise of their price coincided with the disintegration of the olive oil- and wine-producing plantations of southern Italy and loss of markets in the face of competition from Spain, Gaul, and North Africa. (This standard interpretation has been challenged, however.) In the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) serfdom was the predominant form of dependent labour, and slavery was definitely secondary. Manumitting slaves became much easier, according to the laws, and the *Ecloga* and the *Procheiron Nomos* (*see below*) prescribed that the slaves of persons who died without

testament had to be freed. Throughout most of Europe household slavery persisted well into the late Middle Ages and even later and only gradually died out. Slavic slaves were plentiful, for example, in the Italian city-states as late as the 14th century, and African slaves could be found in Spain and Portugal in the 16th century. Serfdom replaced slavery in medieval Germany. By the end of the Middle Ages slavery no longer existed in England, and the famous Cartwright decision of the reign of Elizabeth I (1569) held that "England was too pure an air for slaves to breathe in."

Slavery persisted longer in eastern Europe. In Poland it was replaced by the second enserfment; the sale and purchase of slaves were forbidden in the 15th century. A similar process occurred in Lithuania, where slavery was formally abolished in 1588. In Russia it came to an end with the first enserfment: agricultural slaves were formally converted into serfs in 1679, and household slaves were converted into house serfs in 1723. In the Caucasus and in Central Asia slavery persisted until the second half of the 19th century. As the Russian Empire grew and its hegemony spread, it adopted the tendency of 19th-century imperialist powers to enforce abolition when embarking upon colonization. Thus the conquest of the Caucasus led to the abolition of slavery by the 1860s and the conquest in Central Asia of the Islamic khanates of Bukhara, Samarkand, and Khiva by the 1870s.

The reexportation of slaves from England was challenged by a group of humanitarians led by Granville Sharpe. Chief Justice Mansfield ruled in 1772 that James Somerset, a fugitive slave from Virginia, could not be forcibly returned to the colonies by his master. The fate of slavery in most of the rest of the world depended on the British abolition movement, which was initiated by the English Quakers in 1783 when they presented the first important antislavery petition to Parliament. They were following the Pennsylvania Quakers, who had voiced opposition to slavery in 1688. The Vermont constitution of 1777 was the first document in the United States to abolish slavery. Another sign of the spread of antislavery feeling was the declaration in the U.S. Constitution that the importation of slaves could be forbidden after 20 years (in 1808). An act of March 2, 1807, forbade trading in slaves with Africa. Well before the rise of cotton some people hoped that natural processes combined with a prohibition on infusions would put an end to slavery.

In 1807 the British abolished the slave trade with their colonies. In the Caribbean, slavery was abolished by British Parliamentary fiat, effective July 31, 1834, when 776,000 slaves in the British plantation colonies were freed. The British imperial emancipation can be attributed to the growing power of the philanthropic movement and a double switch in the focus of the British Empire, geographically from west (the Caribbean) to east (India) and economically from protectionism to laissez-faire.

The British move in 1807 to abolish the slave trade had an immediate impact on the juntas struggling for independence in Spanish America. The slave trade was declared illegal in Venezuela and Mexico in 1810, in Chile in 1811, and in Argentina in 1812. In 1817 Spain signed a treaty with Britain agreeing to abolish the slave trade in 1820, but the trade continued to the remaining Spanish colonies until 1880. Chile freed its Black slaves in 1823; Mexico abolished slavery in 1829, and Peru in 1854.

The American antislavery movement, linked to the "Second Great Awakening," succeeded in arousing immense hostility between the non-slave North, where most states had voluntarily abolished slavery by 1804,

and the slaveholding South, where the “peculiar institution” became even further entrenched because of the spread of cotton cultivation. By the 1850s, however, the old abolition movement had flagged. It took political developments and forces (especially the emergence of the Free-Soil movement and the conflict over the expansion of slavery), the South’s secession, the Civil War, and Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, to put slavery on the road to extinction in the United States. The proclamation was confirmed by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which put an end to slavery.

Puerto Rico abolished slavery (with provisions for periods of apprenticeship) in 1873 and Cuba in 1880. Brazil was the last Western Hemisphere nation to abolish slavery. The British antislavery movement of the 1810s had almost put an end to the institution, but a thriving world market for coffee revitalized it in the 1820s. In 1850 Britain declared that a squadron would enter Brazilian territorial waters to seize vessels carrying slaves, and later that year Brazil responded by equating the slave trade with piracy. On May 13, 1888, all Brazilian slaves were manumitted. Initially there was some opposition by the coffee growers, but their resistance crumbled immediately.

The European colonization movement of the second half of the 19th century put an end to slavery in many parts of Africa, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. The abolition of slavery in both Hindu and Muslim India by Act V of 1843 meant only that the British courts would not enforce claims to a slave, but the Penal Code of 1861 made holding a slave a crime. Having seen to the abolition of slavery in most of Latin America and South Asia, the British turned their attention back to Africa. They moved onto the continent, took control of those governments that were thriving on slavery, and attempted to abolish the institution. Lagos was annexed in 1861, and all of Nigeria followed. In the 1870s British missionaries moved into Malawi, the place of origin of the Indian Ocean Islamic slave trade, in an attempt to interdict it at its very source. In 1890 Zanzibar was made a British protectorate after the sultan’s authority had been destroyed by the struggle over the slave trade. In Dahomey the French abolition of slavery resulted in the cessation of ceremonial human sacrifice.

The imperial government formally abolished slavery in China in 1906, and the law became effective on January 31, 1910, when all adult slaves were converted into hired labourers and the young were freed upon reaching age 25. Slavery was legally abolished in Korea in the Gap-o reform of 1894 but remained extant in reality until 1930.

Some parts of Africa and much of the Islamic world retained slavery at the end of World War I. For this reason the League of Nations and later the United Nations took the final extinction of slavery to be one of their obligations. The league had considerable success in Africa, with the assistance of the colonial powers, and by the late 1930s slavery was abolished in Liberia and Ethiopia. After World War II the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights proclaimed the immorality and the illegality of slavery. Slavery was abolished in most Islamic countries, although it persisted in Saudi Arabia into the 1960s. It finally was made illegal in the Arabian Peninsula in 1962. It is probable that slavery no longer exists as a legal phenomenon recognized by a political authority or government any place in the world.

The law of slavery

Sources of slavery law

By definition slavery must be sanctioned by the society in which it exists, and such approval is most easily expressed in written norms or laws. Thus it is not accidental that even the briefest code of a relatively uncomplicated slave-owning society was likely to contain at least a few articles on slavery.

Both slave-owning and slave societies that were part of the major cultural traditions borrowed some of their laws about slavery from the religious texts of their respective civilizations. Principles regarding slavery that proved to be either unprofitable or unworkable were among the first to be discarded. An obvious example is provided by the biblical law that Hebrew slaves were to be manumitted after six years (Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:12). A similar general recommendation that slaves be freed after six years in bondage was adhered to by many Islamic slave-owning societies; it helps to account for the ferocity and frequency of their slave raids, for they had a need for constant replenishment of their slave supplies. In Christian slave societies, on the other hand, the principle that the tenure of slavery should be limited was almost completely ignored.

Practically every society that possessed slaves wrote about them in its laws, and thus only a few codes can be mentioned here. The ancient Mesopotamian laws of Eshnunna (c. 1900 BCE) and the Code of Hammurabi had a number of articles devoted to slavery, as did the Pentateuch. In ancient India the *Laws of Manu* of the 1st century BCE contained numerous laws on slaves.

Little is known about the Athenian law of slavery, but the Roman law of slavery was extraordinarily elaborate. Roman law was summed up in the great Pandects of Justinian of 533 CE, and some of its slave norms later found their way into the Byzantine Ecloga (which incorporated Syrian norms as well) of 726 CE and, more deliberately, into the Procheiron Nomos of 867–879 CE. Romano-Byzantine norms also found their way into the Bulgarian Court Law for the People (“Zakon Sudnyi Liudem”) of the end of the 9th century and the 13th-century Ethiopian Fetha Nagast.

The European barbarian (Germanic) codes, which first appeared in the 5th century CE and remained in effect for about half a millennium, were derived from customary law influenced by Roman law. The slave statutes of the Russian Russkaya Pravda of the 11th–13th century were all clearly of native East Slavic origin. The same was true of the Muscovite court handbooks (Sudebniki) of 1497, 1550, 1589, and 1606. The Muscovite Russians had a special government office to deal with slavery matters, the Slavery Chancellery (1571–1704), and its practice became the basis of chapter 20 of the great Ulozhenie of 1649, which constituted 119 of the 967 articles of the code; other articles dealt with slavery as well.

The Qurʾān was the fundamental starting point for Islamic law (Sharīʿah), including the law of slavery. It was supplemented by the *ijmāʿ*, the scholarly legal consensus, and the *qiyās*, juristic reasoning by analogy. Islamic law regulated in detail every part of the institution of slavery, from the jihad (holy war) and the distribution of booty to the treatment of slaves and emancipation. The last Islamic slave law was promulgated in 1936 by King Ibn Saʿūd of Saudi Arabia, which restated the teachings of the Qurʾān. It also required owners to register slaves with the government and licensed slave traders.

Some sub-Saharan African societies followed Islamic law; others had their own. The latter ordinarily were not systematized until the European colonization movement, and so their law of slavery was oral common law.

Slavery was a relatively prominent institution in the Chinese Tang Code of the 7th century CE. Subsequently it was mentioned in every Chinese law down to the 20th century and was also important in the Korean legal system. The slavery norms of the Mongol Great Yassa of Genghis Khan were locally generated, but subsequent Mongol law reveals considerable influence of the Tang Code.

The circum-Caribbean world had several basic laws of slavery. The slave law of the Spanish-speaking colonies and then independent countries was based on the *Siete Partidas* of 1263–65 of Alfonso X of Castile and León and the Spanish Slave Code of 1789. Another important code in Latin America was Louis XIV's Code Noir of 1685. The Louisiana Slave Code of 1824 was based on the *Siete Partidas* and the Code Napoléon.

The Danish Virgin Islands had two largely locally generated codes of 1733 and 1755, although they were approved by the colonial administration of Denmark. The English colonies were completely autonomous, for England had no law of slavery from which to borrow. The first code was that of Barbados of 1688, whose origins are unknown. It was imitated by the South Carolina code of 1740. Beginning with Virginia in 1662, each colony in North America worked out its own *ex post facto* law of slavery before independence, a process that continued after the creation of the United States and until the Civil War. Slavery is mentioned only three times and referred to at most 10 times (and then only indirectly) in the U.S. Constitution, and, except for a handful of measures on fugitives, there was no federal slave law. The basic protection for the institution of slavery was the Tenth Amendment of 1791, the reserved powers clause, which left the issue of slavery and other matters to the states.

Legal definitions of slavery

Some of the definitions of slavery discussed above were legal, but the majority were not. This section focuses exclusively on legal definitions of slavery. Most groups, whether national or religious, forbade the enslavement of their fellows; thus, the Spanish could not enslave Spaniards, Arabs could not enslave Arabs, and Christians and Muslims could not enslave their coreligionists. Legally, the slave ordinarily had to be an outsider. In law the slave was usually defined as property, and the question then was whether he was movable property (chattel) or real property. In most societies he was movable property, but in some he was real property.

Some societies, such as Muscovy in the 16th and 17th centuries, had different legal categories of slaves. There some slaves were inherited, others were purchased forever, others for a limited time could become perpetual slaves, and still others for specific functions such as estate managers. Different varieties or gradations of slaves were found elsewhere as well, as in China and in certain African societies.

Master-slave legal relationships

The master-slave relationship was the cornerstone of the law of slavery, and yet it was an area about which the law often said very little. In many societies the subordination of the slave to his owner was supposed to be complete; in general, the more complete an owner's control over his slave, the less the law was likely to say about it.

A major touchstone of the nature of a slave society was whether or not the owner had the right to kill his slave. In most Neolithic and Bronze Age societies slaves had no such right, for slaves from ancient Egypt and the Eurasian steppes were buried alive or killed to accompany their deceased owners into the next world. Among the Northwest Coast Tlingit, slave owners killed their slaves in potlatches to demonstrate their contempt for property and wealth; they also killed old or unwanted slaves and threw their bodies into the Pacific Ocean. An owner could kill his slave with impunity in Homeric Greece, ancient India, the Roman Republic, Islamic countries, Anglo-Saxon England, medieval Russia, and many parts of the American South before 1830.

That was not the case in other societies. The Hebrews, the Athenians, and the Romans under the principate restricted the right of slave owners to kill their human chattel. The Code of Justinian changed the definition of the slave from a thing to a person and prescribed the death penalty for an owner who killed his slave by torture, poison, or fire. Spanish law of the 1260s and 1270s denied owners the right to kill their slaves. Lithuanian and Muscovite law forbade the killing, maiming, or starving of a returned fugitive slave. Qing Chinese law punished a master who killed his slave, and that punishment was more severe if the slave had done no wrong. The Aztecs under some circumstances put to death a slave owner who killed his slave. No society, on the other hand, had the slightest sympathy for the slave who killed his owner. Roman law even prescribed that all other slaves living under the same roof were to be put to death along with the slave who had committed the homicide.

Assault and general brutality were other concerns of the law of slavery. In antiquity slaves often had the right to take refuge in a temple to escape cruel owners, but that sometimes afforded little protection. The ancient Franks and the Germans warned owners against cruelty. The Code of Justinian and the Spanish *Siete Partidas* deprived cruel owners of their slaves, and that tradition went into the Louisiana Black Code of 1806, which made cruel punishment of slaves a crime. In modern societies brutality and sadistic murder of slaves by their owners were rarely condoned on the grounds that such episodes demoralized other slaves and made them rebellious, but few slave owners were actually punished for mistreating their slaves. In the American South 10 codes prescribed forced sale to another owner or emancipation for mistreated slaves. Nevertheless, cases such as *State v. Hoover* (North Carolina, 1839) and *State v. Jones* (Alabama, 1843) were considered sensational because slave owners were punished for savagely "correcting" their slaves to death.

It was not an axiom of the master-slave relationship that the former automatically had sexual access to the latter. That was indeed the case in most societies, ranging from the ancient Middle East, Athens, and Rome to Africa, all Islamic countries, and the American South. Places such as Muscovy, however, forbade owners to rape their female slaves, while the Chinese and the Lombards forbade the raping of married slave women. More problematic were sexual relations between mistresses and male slaves. Athens and Rome both put the slave to death, and Byzantine law prescribed that the mistress was to be executed and the slave to be burned

alive. The Danish Virgin Islands' laws of 1741, 1755, and 1783, in an attempt to protect northern Europeans from African "contamination," prescribed a fine of 2,000 pounds of sugar for a man who raped a Black slave, and a white woman who had sexual relations with a Black slave was to be fined, imprisoned, and then deported.

The labour and food regimes were central to almost every slave's life. In societies where the owner's control over his slave was total, such as the Roman Empire or the pre-1830 American South, the law said little or nothing about how long he could work him and whether his slave had a right to food and clothing. In South India the slave owner had an absolute right to whatever labour his slave was capable of rendering. In Muscovy, on the other hand, a slave owner was jailed for forcing his slaves to labour on Sunday. In Judea in 200 BCE, in Sicily in 135–32 BCE, and on the Nile in 46 CE, regulations prescribed the food rations a slave could expect. The Lithuanian Statute of 1588 and the Russians in 1603 and 1649 decreed that slaves had a right to be fed. The Danish Virgin Islands in 1755 prescribed adequate food rations. The Alabama Slave Code of 1852 mandated that the owner had to provide slaves of working age a sufficiency of healthy food, clothing, attention during illness, and necessities in old age.

Family and property

A major issue was whether the master had to allow the slave to marry and what rights the owner had over slave offspring. In general, a slave had far fewer rights to his offspring than to his spouse. Babylonian, Hebrew, Tibetan-speaking Nepalese Nyinba, Siamese, and American Southern slave owners thought nothing of breaking up both the conjugal unit and the nuclear family. Unexpectedly, the 1755 Danish Virgin Islands Reglement prohibited separating minors from their parents. In Muscovy and China, slave owners could sell or will children apart from their parents, but marriages were inviolable.

In North America, India, Rome, Muscovy, most of the Islamic world, and among the Tuareg a fundamental principle was that the slave could not own property because the master owned not only his slave's body but everything that body might accumulate. This did not mean, however, that slaves could not possess and accumulate property but only that their owners had legal title to whatever the slaves had. In a host of other societies, such as ancient and Roman Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Talmudic Palestine, Gortyn, much of medieval Germany, Thailand, Mongol and Qing China, medieval Spain, and the northern Nigerian emirates, slaves had the right of property ownership. Some places, such as Rome, allowed slaves to accumulate, manage, and use property in a *peculium* that was legally revocable but could be used to purchase their freedom. This provision gave slaves an incentive to work as well as the hope of eventual manumission.

Considerable research has been done on the treatment of slaves, and the consensus is that, while the law may have spelled out the desired social standards of master-slave relations, it did not necessarily define the reality for any particular situation. Sadists, even psychopaths, who could not cope with their right of total dominance over another human being, might appear anywhere, as might kindly masters. More determining than the law were the conditions of the society itself. At one extreme, among the Tuareg of North Africa, the slave owners themselves often lived badly, and so, of course, did their slaves. At the other extreme, in the American South material conditions were sufficiently favourable to provide comparative comfort for both masters and slaves.

Moreover, slaves born of already enslaved parents usually were treated much better than those purchased or captured from foreign groups. The treatment of slaves in expansive, dynamic societies was likely to be worse than in more stable ones.

Legal relationships between slave owners

There was more uniformity across systems regarding legal relationships between slave owners. All societies had provisions for the recovery of runaways, and most imposed sanctions on owners who stole others' slaves (a capital offense in some systems) or helped them to flee. There also were relatively uniform laws about passing slaves from one generation to another.

There was considerable variability among societies in the law of slave transactions. Whereas Roman-law societies had elaborate norms on contracts, Muscovy had essentially none. Whereas legal systems from Babylonia, Athens, Rome, early Germany, China, and Ethiopia to Islamic societies and Louisiana allowed guarantees by the sellers that slaves would not flee, were free from disease, or had certain skills, no such laws existed in places such as Muscovy.

Legal relationships between slaves and free strangers

Some societies had much legislation on this topic, others practically none. Where the slave was completely dependent on his owner, few laws existed beyond the normal rules governing any form of property; it was the owner's responsibility to recover damages if a third party killed or assaulted either his cow or his slave. The owner, moreover, was held equally or even more responsible for the slave's actions, ranging from homicide to theft, than was the slave himself, for the society desired that the former control his property and there was no assurance that sanctions, especially money fines, could be enforced against slaves.

Homicide of a slave by a stranger was a revealing test of a society's attitude toward the slave. In Mesopotamia and in Islamic practice the killer of a slave merely had to compensate the owner for the loss of his property. Elsewhere, however, it was different. Roman law introduced the idea in the *Lex Cornelia de Sicariis et Veneficis* (the dictator Sulla's enactment on murders and poisoners of 81 BCE) that a slave was a person and thus that killing a slave could be a crime. That provision found its way into the Code of Justinian. In North America in the period from 1770 to 1830 the killing of a slave was equated in common law with the murder of a white person. Laws were uniformly harsh when a slave killed a stranger who was a freeman.

Some societies did not allow third parties to assault slaves with impunity. In Muscovy, for example, a slave might have honour and could recover from a third party who injured his honour. Societies elsewhere, however, such as the North American Yurok, Tlingit, and other neighbouring Indians, as well as in the American South, explicitly stated that slaves could have no honour, personal status, or prestige. South Carolina law noted that the slave was not "within the peace of the state, and therefore the peace of the state [was] not broken by an assault and battery on him." Conversely, when a slave assaulted a freeman, the latter often recovered from the slave's owner. Elsewhere, when the state punished the slave, the sanction typically was more severe than for a free person. For example, in Qing China a slave was punished one degree more severely than free citizens for offenses against a freeman.

Most societies, such as those in Athens, Rome, Kievan Rus, Thailand, and Louisiana, did not allow slaves to contract independently with third parties, although some allowed the slave to make a contract on his owner's behalf. The brutal deprivation of rights was expressed in the Alabama case *Creswell's Executor v. Walter* (1860); the slave, said the court, had "no legal mind, no will which the law can recognize.... Because they are slaves, they are incapable of performing civil acts." On the other hand, in a few societies, as in the ancient Middle East, slaves were allowed to contract with third parties. Roman slaves were allowed to make contracts in regard to third peculium.

A few societies, such as late Assyria and Muscovy, allowed slaves to testify in court, but most did not. It was a rare society that permitted a slave to serve as a witness against his owner, but some societies, such as ancient Nuzi and Muscovy, allowed slaves to testify against, even to sue, third parties. That was particularly likely to be the case when slaves played a major role in the society, because disputes could not be resolved by the freemen alone without resort to evidence provided by slaves.

Laws of manumission

Laws of manumission varied widely from society to society and within societies across time. They are often viewed as the litmus test of a particular society's views of the slave, that is, of the capacities the slave was likely to exhibit as a free human being. Many Islamic societies, broadly interpreting the Hebrew prescription, generally prescribed that slave owners had to free their slaves after the passage of a number of years, essentially the length of time they considered it took for an "outsider" to become an "insider." Most other societies allowed masters to free their slaves whenever they wished, although there were exceptions. Some legal systems prescribed manumission when the slave adopted the religion of his owner. It is hardly surprising that manumission was more frequent in systems of household slavery, for intimate relations between master and slave soon converted the outsider into an insider. With notable exceptions, such as Athens, Rome, Muscovy, and some circum-Caribbean societies, many societies required manumission after three generations.

Birth was occasionally a route to manumission. In thriving slave systems such as those of the New World, in harsh systems such as those among the Northwest Coast Indians and the medieval Germanic peoples, or even in milder systems such as those of the Chinese and the Muscovites, a slave's offspring simply added to the slave population. But that was not universally the case; African slave societies, such as the Dahomeans of West Africa, the Ashanti of Ghana, or the Azande living between the Congo and the Nile, prescribed that the offspring of slaves should be free, as part of the process of incorporation into a new lineage. Although Islamic law did not require manumission upon birth, the Qur'ān recommended it, and slave owners were often inclined to follow the religious tenet. The Aztecs freed all children born in slavery except the offspring of traitors. In Thailand emancipation was considered a pious act, and at their death many owners freed their slaves.

The rate of manumission did not necessarily correspond to the legal ease of manumission. It should be noted, however, that in Rome manumission was relatively easy and was widely practiced, even though there was a 5 percent tax on manumission in the Republic, and the Lex Fufia Caninia of 2 BCE forbade manumission by

testament of more than a fifth to a half of one's slaves, depending on the number owned. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, manumission was common in most periods, and the freed person typically became a kind of relative in a process of assimilation. In Neo-Babylonia, in Late and Middle Assyria, and in Muscovy manumission was easy but rare; in the American South manumission was comparatively difficult and almost never happened after the prohibition on importing new slaves. The factors of institutional dynamism, expansionism, and profitability, as well as race (*see below*), may have been the most crucial variants for the South, where manumission was even forbidden in South Carolina in 1820, Mississippi in 1822, Arkansas in 1858, and Maryland and Alabama in 1860; other factors were at work in the ancient Middle East and Muscovy.

There was considerable variation among societies as to whether a slave was allowed to accumulate property that he might keep after manumission. One form of such accumulation was the Roman *peculium*, which legally belonged to the master. One of its heirs was called *coartación*, the self-purchase system, widely used 1,500 years later in Latin America.

After manumission, most societies prescribed a period of legal transition to freedom. In the Roman Empire, China, and elsewhere, this period took three generations and might mean that the grandchild of a slave owner (the "patron") was legally responsible for the grandchild of a slave (his "client"). Thereafter the descendants of the freedman became full members of society, although perhaps still despised. The reason for the legally mandated period of transition to freedom was clear: the slave initially was not a member of the society but an outsider (*see below*), and it took time to become integrated into the new society. Equally important, the slave was dependent on his owner, and it took time for the freedman and his heirs to become fully self-reliant members of society. If the slave owner and his heirs were not responsible for the freedmen, the fear was, as expressed in the Louisiana Slave Code of 1824, that the latter might otherwise become public wards.

The sociology of slavery

The slave as outsider

The slave generally was an outsider. He ordinarily was of a different race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion from his owner. The general rule, as enunciated by the specialist on classical slavery Moses I. Finley, was that "no society could withstand the tension inherent in enslaving its own members." In most cases, the slave was an outsider because he was enslaved against his will in one society and then taken by force to another.

As with nearly all rules, there were exceptions, however. Korea, for reasons that are not understood, was one. India was another exception, because of ritual requirements that the social origins of intimate associates be known; there slaves were ritually distanced from their owners. Muscovite Russia, which had outsider slaves as well, was yet another exception, perhaps because the boundaries between insiders and outsiders were blurred. A number of scholars have pointed out that, although the status of the slaves was uniformly lower than that of comparable free people in every society, the material and sometimes other conditions of slaves were frequently better than those of free people; thus it is not surprising that free people occasionally volunteered to be slaves. What is somewhat more surprising is that so few societies found that form of social welfare to be acceptable; most took measures to prohibit or inhibit it. Solon in 594 BCE, for example, forbade

enslavement for debt in Athens, and the Lex Poetelia Papiria did the same for Rome, about 326 BCE.

Muscovy in 1597 prevented self-sale into slavery from becoming hereditary by mandating manumission of such slaves on their owners' deaths.

Regardless of the slave's origin, he was nearly always a marginal person in the society in which he was enslaved. In Africa slaves were despised, and their low status, which was passed on to freedmen, persists to the present time. In most societies most slaves were at the very bottom of society.

Attitudes toward slavery: the matter of race

Slaves in most societies were despised. This is best seen in the homology for slaves. The favourite homology was the woman or wife, then the minor child or an animal. Other terms for slaves were the apprentice, the pauper, the harlot, the felon, the actor, and the complex image of the Southern "Sambo" or Caribbean "Quashee." Throughout history slaves have often been considered to be stupid, uneducable, childlike, lazy, untruthful, untrustworthy, prone to drunkenness, idle, boorish, lascivious, licentious, and cowardly. In China slaves were considered to be "mean" and "base"; in India they were fed table scraps.

The attitudes of the world's great religions toward slavery are of special interest. The Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition has been the most tolerant of slavery. Judaic and Islamic canonical texts refer frequently to slavery and treat it as a natural condition that might befall anyone. But they view it as a condition that should be gotten over quickly. Islamic practice was based on the assumption that the outsider rapidly became an insider and consequently had to be manumitted after six years. New Testament Christianity, on the other hand, had no prescriptions that slaves be manumitted. Canon law sanctioned slavery. This was attributable at least partially to Christianity's primary focus on spiritual values and salvation after death rather than on temporal conditions and the present life. Under such a regime it mattered little whether someone was a slave or a free person while living on earth.

A major issue in the topic of attitudes toward slavery is that of race. Although slaves were usually outsiders and often despised, there nevertheless were different kinds of outsiders and different degrees of contempt. Studies have shown that race made a difference. In Rome, where most owners and slaves were white, manumission was frequent. In Africa, where most owners and slaves were Black, lineage incorporation was the primary purpose of slavery, and in most societies slaves were allowed to participate in many aspects of social life. In the American South, however, where the owners were of northern European stock and the slaves of African stock, the degree of social isolation of and contempt for slaves was extraordinary. Southern slaves were forbidden to engage in occupations that might demonstrate their capacities, intermarriage almost never occurred, and manumission was almost unheard of as the reigning publicists proclaimed ever more loudly that Blacks lacked any capacity to maintain themselves as free individuals.

Slave occupations

Throughout history the range of occupations held by slaves has been nearly as broad as that held by free persons, but it varied greatly from society to society. The actual range did not depend upon whether the slave lived in a slave-owning or a slave society, although the greatest restrictions appeared in the latter.

To start at the top, the highest position slaves ever attained was that of slave minister, or *ministerialis*. *Ministeriales* existed in the Byzantine Empire, Merovingian France, 11th-century Germany during the Salian dynasty, medieval Muscovy, and throughout the Ottoman Empire. A few slaves even rose to be monarchs, such as the slaves who became sultans and founded dynasties in Islam.

At a level lower than that of slave ministers were other slaves, such as those in the Roman Empire, the Central Asian Samanid domains, Qing China, and elsewhere, who worked in government offices and administered provinces. Some of those slaves were government property, whereas others belonged to private individuals who employed them for government work.

On a level similar to that of slaves working in government were the so-called temple slaves. They were employed by religious institutions in Babylonia, Rome, and elsewhere. Unless they were ultimately destined for sacrifice to the gods, temple slaves usually enjoyed a much easier life than other slaves. They served in occupations ranging from priestess to janitor.

Slaves fought as soldiers and usually were considered of high status. In some societies military slaves belonged to private individuals, in others to the government. In 16th-century Muscovy, for example, cavalymen purchased slaves who fought alongside them on horseback; in the later 17th century Muscovite slaves were relegated to guarding the baggage train. A special type of slave soldier was the Ottoman janissary. The Islamic Ottoman Turks confiscated Christian children (called "the tribute children"), took them to Istanbul, and raised them to be professional soldiers, or janissaries. Some janissaries served as members of the palace guard and became involved in the succession struggles of the Ottoman Empire. The Egyptian Mamlūks were also professional soldiers of slave origin who rose to run the entire country. The African Hausa of Zaria and most Sudanic regimes included slaves in all ranks of the soldiery and command. The canoe crews of the West African coast were usually slaves. The British even had detachments of slave soldiers in the Caribbean.

Societies that explicitly refused to employ slaves in combat, such as Athens in its fleet, Rome in its infantry legions, or the American South in the Civil War, were rare. They took such action because fighting was done by freemen, and it was feared that it would be necessary to free the slaves if they could fight. In fact, all of those slave societies occasionally resorted to using slave soldiers when their military situations became desperate.

In many societies slaves were employed as estate managers or bailiffs. This was especially likely to be the case when it was deemed unfitting for freemen to take or give orders involving other freemen. Where such cultural taboos existed, managers were almost always either real outsiders (imported foreigners) or fictive outsiders (slaves). In Muscovy estate managers were a special category of slave, and they were the first whose registration with the central authorities was required.

Still other high-status slaves worked as merchants. Before the invention of the corporation, using slaves was one way to expand the family firm. The practice seems to have begun in Babylonia and was perpetuated in Rome, Spain, the Islamic world, China, and Africa. Slaves were entrusted with large sums of money and were given charge of long-distance caravans. A few slaves in Muscovy were similarly employed in the Siberian fur

trade. Other societies, particularly in the American South, forbade slaves to engage in commerce out of fear that they would sell stolen goods.

In nearly all societies possessing slaves, some slaves were found in what might be termed urban occupations ranging from petty shopkeepers to craftsmen. In the Tredegar Iron Works of Richmond, Virginia, much of the labour force consisted of slaves. In the American South, ancient Rome, Muscovy, and many other societies, slaves worked as carpenters, tailors, and masons. In Bursa, Turkey, some of the finest weaving ever done was by slave craftsmen, who often contracted to fulfill a certain amount of work in exchange for emancipation. The stereotype that slaves were careless and could only be trusted to do the crudest forms of manual labour was disproved countless times in societies that had different expectations and proper incentives.

Only a small portion of slaves throughout history were fortunate enough to be employed in elite or prestige occupations. Most were assigned to strictly physical labour, sometimes the most degrading a society had to offer. Among the worst forms of slave employment were prostitution and occupations demanding hard physical labour. Mining, often conducted in dangerous conditions causing high death rates, seems to have been the worst. The silver mines at Laurium employed as many as 30,000 slaves, who contributed to the prosperity on which Athenian democracy was based. Slaves were also used in gold mining in Africa and in gold and silver mining in Latin America. Gold and coal mining employed (and killed) millions of state slaves of the Gulag in the Soviet Union between the 1920s and 1956. Slaves have been used on great construction projects such as military fortifications, roads, irrigation projects, and temples from Babylonian to Soviet times. Timber felling for lumber and firewood was another form of hard slave labour, as in the Gulag. Yet another form of brutal slave labour was rowing in the galleys, particularly those that belonged to the Ottoman Empire and sailed the Mediterranean. Tens of thousands of Slavs, victims of Crimean Tatar slave raids, first suffered a hellish existence in Crimea itself and then ended their days rowing on Ottoman triremes.

Agriculture

Large numbers of slaves were employed in agriculture. As a general rule, slaves were considered suitable for working some crops but not others. Slaves rarely were employed in growing grains such as rye, oats, wheat, millet, and barley, although at one time or another slaves sowed and especially harvested all of these crops. Most favoured by slave owners were commercial crops such as olives, grapes, sugar, cotton, tobacco, coffee, and certain forms of rice that demanded intense labour to plant, considerable tending throughout the growing season, and significant labour for harvesting. The presence or absence of such crops and their relative profitability were among the major determinants of whether or not a slave-owning society became a slave society. In the Roman Empire employment in olive groves and vineyards occupied many slaves. Sugar cultivation made 9th-century Iraq into a slave society. Rice, coconut, coffee, clove, kola nut, peanut, and sesame cultivation were central occupations in some African societies.

The great discovery in Brazil in the second half of the 16th century was the gang labour system, which was so cost-effective that it made Brazilian sugar cheaper in Europe than the sugar produced in the islands off Africa. A plantation using gang labour could produce, on average, 39 percent more output from comparable inputs than could free farms or farms employing non-gang slave labour. The secret of success was that slaves could

be driven, whereas free labour could not; this led to the creation of very profitable gangs of slaves supervised by white overseers and Black drivers. Tobacco and coffee cultivation also used gang labour, but cultivation of these crops was less physically demanding than that of sugar and cotton and led to much lower mortality rates than did sugar and rice.

Throughout history domestic service was probably the major slave occupation. Drawing water, hewing wood, cleaning, cooking, waiting on table, taking out the garbage, shopping, child-tending, and similar domestic occupations were the major functions of slaves in all slave-owning societies. In a major productive slave system, the Roman Empire at the time of Augustus and later, the richest 5 percent of Italy's population owned one million house slaves (another two million were employed elsewhere, out of a total population of about 7.5 million people). In yet another productive slave system, the American South, large numbers of slaves also worked in their owners' houses. A related function was concubinage, unquestionably one of the major uses of female slaves since the beginning of the institution and particularly prevalent in China. Some societies prescribed that a concubine who bore her owner children was to be freed; others, ranging from the ancient Middle East to the European Middle Ages, specified that the offspring of free-slave unions were to be freed. Rome and the American South were unusual in believing that all concubines and offspring should remain enslaved. Added to this in Africa was the function of lineage expansion, one of the major purposes of slavery in the sub-Saharan region.

Slave demography

It is sometimes alleged that slavery and marriage were totally incompatible, for recognition of the husband-wife bond would have limited intolerably the slave owner's authority and his right to dispose of his property. Historically, however, such a view is incorrect. Limitations on the right to dispose of property have been frequent throughout history, and slaves were no exception. Thus, slave marriages were recognized in a number of slave-owning societies, including Carthage, Hellenistic Greece, late Byzantium, most of the Roman Catholic medieval world, Qing China, Hindu India, Thailand, the Tlingit and Kwakiutl, and Oregon coast tribes. Hanbalī Muslims stated that a slave could insist that his master provide him with a spouse, and Ming Chinese masters were obliged to choose mates for their female slaves when the latter were in their teens and for males around the age of 20. In Russia marriage between a free person and a slave was recognized legally, but according to one of the oldest Russian laws the free person became enslaved by marrying a slave. In Muscovy if a married slave fled, remarried, and was subsequently apprehended, he was to be rejoined to the first spouse.

In the majority of slave societies (the Danish Virgin Islands excepted), on the other hand, slave marriages were not recognized in law and were not something that slave owners had to think about legally when disposing of slaves. For example, the Louisiana Code of 1824 explicitly stated that a slave had no right to be married. Nevertheless, even in these societies, including Rome, the American South, and West Indian Barbuda, slaves formed what they considered marriages and had children. Southern slave owners often recognized such marriages (even across estate boundaries) and their offspring because to have done otherwise would have interfered with production. In Brazil slave marriages were recognized by the Roman Catholic

Church and recognized by law in 1869, but in 1875 only one-sixth of the slaves of marriageable age were recorded as married or widowed.

Slave demography was frequently determined by the occupational employment of the slaves. Consequently, sexual imbalance was not at all unusual. In 9th-century France on the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés's territory there were nearly three male slaves for every female, presumably because of the demand for agricultural labourers. In late medieval Europe, on the other hand, there was a great demand for female slaves as domestics and concubines. The same was true in China, where by the end of the Qing era the institution of slavery had become primarily a female one. In early modern Russia there were two male slaves for every female because of a market demand for cavalrymen, military body servants, and domestics who could perform heavy labour. Concubinage, moreover, was illegal, and those who sold themselves into slavery practiced female infanticide before selling themselves. In many parts of Africa the demand was primarily for women and children for the purpose of incorporation into and expansion of lineages. Adult males were often killed unless they could be exported abroad. Such export conveniently fit into the circum-Caribbean demand for productive slaves to work in sugar, tobacco, and cotton production. Consequently, twice as many males as females and relatively few children under age 10 were shipped to the New World.

One of the notions about slavery has been that slaves rarely reproduced themselves in bondage. Given the skewed demographic profile of many slave societies, it is not surprising that they failed to do so. The slaves of the Athenian Laurium silver mines or the Cuban sugar plantations, for example, lived in largely male societies. In Islamic slave-owning societies, castration and infibulation curtailed slave reproduction.

The major exception to the rule was North America, where slaves began to procreate in significant numbers in the mid-18th century. This fact helped the slave owners survive the cutting off of imports in 1808. Between the censuses of 1790 and 1860 the slave population of the South expanded enormously—from 657,327 to 3,838,765—one of the fastest rates of population growth ever recorded prior to the advent of modern medicine. Paradoxically, although the Southern slave regime was one of the most dehumanizing ever recorded, it was one of the most favourable on record demographically, because the nutritional and general living environments were highly conducive to explosive population growth. Without significant imports the Southern slave population increased fourfold between the early 1800s and 1860.

The ages of slave populations also were determined partially by productive requirements. As mentioned above, in Africa children were preferred for incorporation into lineages, whereas in much of the circum-Caribbean world adults were demanded for production. As a consequence, the age pyramids of both societies were skewed; in Africa children predominated, in much of the New World people over age 15. In Muscovy, to take another example, the age structure was skewed toward young adults, for it was primarily young adult males (aged 15–25) who sold themselves into slavery.

Slave protest

Throughout history human beings have objected to being enslaved and have responded in myriad ways ranging from individual shirking, alcoholism, flight, and suicide to arson, murdering owners, and mass rebellion. Perhaps the most common individual response to enslavement was sluggishness, passivity, and

indifference. A nearly universal stereotype of the slave was of a lying, lazy, dull brute who had to be kicked or whipped. There probably were three mutually reinforcing factors at work: an unconscious response to overcontrol and absence of freedom, a conscious effort to sabotage the master's desires, and a conditioned response to the expectation of stereotypical behaviour. Some owners tried to overcome such behaviour by a system of incentives or by strict regimentation, such as the gang system, but historically they were in a minority. Less frequent was suicide. A number of slaves are known to have jumped overboard during the Middle Passage because they feared that the transatlantic voyage was taking them to be eaten by witches or barbarians, a fate that seemed worse than drowning.

Flight, either individually or in groups, was one of the most visible forms of protest against enslavement. The rates of flight, which varied greatly from society to society throughout history, usually depended less on individual slave-owner conduct than on the likelihood of success. Immediate conditions, such as the brutality of an overseer or master or a temporary lapse of supervision, often precipitated slave flight, but willingness to undertake such a form of rebellion against the system was usually determined by such factors as the accessibility of refuge or the ability to blend in with the free population (some societies marked slaves to inhibit such blending). Slave flight was infrequent in societies such as the peacetime American South or in West Africa, where a refuge of freedom was very distant. In East Africa, where flight was curtailed by slave owners united in their desire to prevent it in spite of a high demand for labour, runaways joined neighbouring communities and then raided their former masters. For more than two centuries fugitive slaves in Brazil known as Maroons set up independent polities, or *quilombos*, that lasted for years. Maroon communities were found in many other places in Latin America and the Caribbean as well. In Muscovy, where most of the slaves were natives or of similar origin (Poles and Swedes), where there was an open frontier, and where masters had no compunction about taking in other owners' slaves, the rate of flight was very high, and as many as a quarter to a third of the slaves ran away. In China flight by male slaves was also common. During the American Revolution, when the slave owners were occupied with fighting the British, fugitive slaves numbered in the tens of thousands.

Direct, personal attacks on slave owners often were determined by the nature of the slave regime. Where owners believed they enjoyed automatic sexual access to female slaves, both the women and their "husbands" were prone to respond by assaulting the owners or their agents. In Hausaland, killings by concubines instilled great fear in slave owners. Where slaves were driven, assault on the drivers was not an uncommon response. As a result, overseers in the Mississippi valley feared for their lives and constantly carried arms.

The most dramatic form of slave protest was outright rebellion. Slave uprisings varied enormously in frequency, size, intensity, and duration. Perhaps the calmest of all known slave societies were those of West Africa, where the predominance of women and children caused rebellions to be very few. Slave rebellions in North America were also noticeably few and involved only a handful of participants: the New York revolt of 1712, the Stono rebellion of South Carolina (1739), the Gabriel plot in Richmond, Virginia (1800), the Denmark Vesey conspiracy in Charleston, South Carolina (1822), and Nat Turner's uprising in Jerusalem, Virginia (1831), are the best known. Southern slave uprisings were so few and so small because of the absolute certainty that they would be brutally repressed. The Turner rebellion is usually given as the reason for the marked increase in the severity of the slave regime after 1831.

Other slave revolts were on a much grander scale than those of West Africa and North America. One of the most famous slave uprisings was the Gladiatorial War led by Spartacus against Rome in 73–71 BCE. The Spartacus rebellion was brutally repressed (the roads leading into Rome were lined with gibbets from which rebel corpses hung). Slaves led the Khlopko and Bolotnikov uprisings in Muscovy in 1603 and 1606, respectively, a time of dynastic crisis. Another great slave rebellion was that of the Zanj (Black slaves imported from Zanzibar) in Iraq and Khuzistan in the years 869–883. It was joined by fair-skinned slaves as well and was on a larger scale than the Spartacus revolt. Slave rebellion in China at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century was so extensive that owners eventually eschewed male slaves and converted the institution into a female-dominated one.

Slave rebellions occurred in every slave society in the Americas from the 16th century onward. Prominent slave revolts occurred in Jamaica in 1760, 1798, and 1831–32, in Barbados in 1816, and in British Guiana in 1823. Perhaps the most famous Caribbean rebellion, in Saint-Domingue, began in 1791 and was subsequently led to victory by the freedman Toussaint-Louverture; it produced the emancipation of its slaves while the French were preoccupied with their own revolution and ultimately led to the independent state of Haiti.

Slave culture

The institution of slavery usually tried to deny its victims their native cultural identity. Torn out of their own cultural milieus, they were expected to abandon their heritage and to adopt at least part of their enslavers' culture. Nonetheless, studies have shown that there were aspects of slave culture that differed from the master culture. Some of these have been interpreted as a form of resistance to oppression, while other aspects were clearly survivals of a native culture in the new society. Most of what is known about this topic comes from the circum-Caribbean world, but analogous developments may have occurred wherever alien slaves were concentrated in numbers sufficient to prevent their complete absorption by the host slave-owning or slave society. Thus slave culture was probably very different on large plantations from what it was on small farms or in urban households, where slave culture (and especially Creole slave culture) could hardly have avoided being very similar to the master culture. Slave cultures grew up within the perimeters of the masters' monopoly of power but separate from the masters' institutions.

Religion, which performed the multiple function of explanation, prediction, control, and communion, seems to have been a particularly fruitful area for the creation of slave culture. Africans perceived all misfortunes, including enslavement, as the result of sorcery, and their religious practices and beliefs, which were often millennial, were formulated as a way of coping with it. Myalism was the first religious movement to appeal to all ethnic groups in Jamaica, Vodou in Haiti was the product of African culture slightly refashioned on that island, and syncretic Afro-Christian religions and rituals appeared nearly everywhere throughout the New World. Slave religions usually had a supreme being and a host of lesser spirits brought from Africa, borrowed from the Amerindians, and created in response to local conditions. There were no firm boundaries between the secular and the sacred, which infused all things and activities. At least initially African slaves universally believed that posthumously they would return to their lands and rejoin their friends.

Black slaves preserved some of their culture in the New World. African medicine was practiced in America by slaves. The poisoning of masters and other hated individuals was a particularly African method of coping with evil. Throughout the circum-Caribbean world slaves and free Blacks had electoral procedures, adapted from West African customs, to choose governors, sheriffs, and judges to maintain order among themselves. Objects of material culture, such as rugs, mats, baskets, thatched roofs, and walking canes, were modeled on African examples. Nevertheless, relatively few African social practices or plastic arts survived in the New World. On the other hand, Afro-American music and dance are known to have many African roots, and they differed dramatically from the practices of the European master culture; the use of drum and banjo were especially significant. Songs and spirituals borrowed their strong call-and-response patterns from the West African style. Furthermore, slaves created tales to amuse themselves, and the African element is most evident in animal tales; the tar-baby story is among the best known of the genre. Afro-American stories and songs often featured the devil, who was a demon and a trickster, terrifying, a friend in need, and a source of mirth.

Slave culture also developed beliefs and customs that were at odds with those of the master culture. One such belief was that what the masters called theft was something else; thus stealing from the master was not theft at all but merely a process of channeling his property from one use to another, as in taking his corn and feeding it to his pigs. Polygamous domestic arrangements were a further aspect of slave culture brought from Africa. Yet another aspect of slave culture, especially prevalent in the Caribbean, involved the market. Slaves there were often required to provide their own food, which they raised on provision grounds. If they had any surplus, they were permitted by their owners to sell it in the market. As a result, slaves developed an autonomy and an individualism that contrasted starkly with the rigid control of the work gang system and the putative stifling control of slave law.

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